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BRITAIN'S BESTSELLING FAMILY HISTORY MAGAZINE

WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?®

METROPOLITAN POLICE ANCESTORS

50 WEBSITES TO WATCH

From WW2 service records to new historic maps, we preview the best resources coming online in 2024

TRAVELLERS AND GYPSIES Explore your Romany roots

NORTHERN IRELAND KIN Expert research guide

A DNA test took my research back to the court of Henry VIII

TRADE UNION RECORDS Find registers online

DANCING WITH JANE AUSTEN In the footsteps of our Georgian forebears

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

- A Polish teenager's Holocaust diary
- Get more from Findmypast newspapers
- Your family history queries answered

This was Sylvia's promise to you...

A generation ago, a woman named Sylvia made a promise. As a doctor's secretary, she'd watched stroke destroy the lives of so many people. She was determined to make sure we could all live in a world where we're far less likely to lose our lives to stroke.

She kept her promise, and a gift to the Stroke Association was included in her Will. Sylvia's gift helped fund the work that made sure many more of us survive stroke now than did in her lifetime.

Sylvia changed the story for us all. Now it's our turn to change the story for those who'll come after us.

Stroke still shatters lives and tears families apart. And for so many survivors the road to recovery is still long and desperately lonely. If you or someone you love has been affected by stroke – you'll know just what that means.

But it doesn't have to be like this. You can change the story, just like Sylvia did, with a gift in your Will. All it takes is a promise.

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or visit stroke.org.uk/legacy

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The Stroke Association is registered as a charity in England and Wales (No 211015) and in Scotland (SC037789).
Also registered in the Isle of Man (No. 945) and Jersey (NPO 369), and operating as a charity in Northern Ireland.

Stroke Association

Welcome

Sarah's Top Tip

Search newspapers smarter with improved functionality on Findmypast

I spend a lot of time trawling historic newspapers, and I used to advise subscribers to Findmypast (**findmypast.co.uk**) to first use the British Newspaper Archive (**britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk**) search engine then view relevant results on Findmypast – far from ideal. So I'm thrilled that the site's search functionality has improved (see **page 52**). Even if you don't subscribe, you can register and view lots of free pages.

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Every year I get super excited by the arrival of Jonathan Scott's copy for our 50 websites to watch article (**page 14**). A lot of time and effort goes into collating the list and I appreciate all of the archives, groups and companies who respond to his requests for information. Reading about what is coming down the line for family historians not only gives me ideas for the magazine, it also inspires my own research. What are you most looking forward to in 2024?

If you've got someone in your family tree who was involved in policing London, then you will enjoy our article about the Met on **page 29**. We are grateful to Edward Smith at the Metropolitan Police Museum for his advice, including where to find free records online.

I also enjoyed Paul Blake's masterclass on trade union registers (**page 38**). Exploring the collection on Findmypast I was struck by how many photographs of members I came across, especially in the First World War collection. If you subscribe to Findmypast, do have a look – and check Paul's advice on finding other surviving registers.

We also have tips on tracing Romany roots (**page 35**), a guide to searching for family in Northern Ireland (**page 61**) and a handy step-by-step on using Findmypast's improved newspaper search function (**page 52**). And if, like me, you love the world of Jane Austen, turn to **page 54** and you can dance in the New Year with a quadrille.

Sarah

Sarah Williams Editor
sarah.williams@ourmedia.co.uk

Contributors

Jonathan Scott
Jonathan writes our 'Best Websites' article every issue, but once a year he casts his net wider to uncover the genealogical gems going online in the next 12 months (**page 14**).

Edward Smith
Edward has been curatorial assistant at the Metropolitan Police Museum for over five years. A keen genealogist, he shares tips for researching Met officers on **page 29**.

Felicity Day
Felicity is the author of *The Game of Hearts: the Lives and Loves of Regency Women* (2022). She talks about dancing and what it meant for our Georgian forebears on **page 54**.

COVER IMAGE: GETTY IMAGES/AUXILIARY TERRITORIAL SERVICE ANTI-AIRCRAFT SPOTTER, MISS PARKER, SPOTS FOR ENEMY AIRCRAFT NEAR LONDON, 14 JUNE 1943

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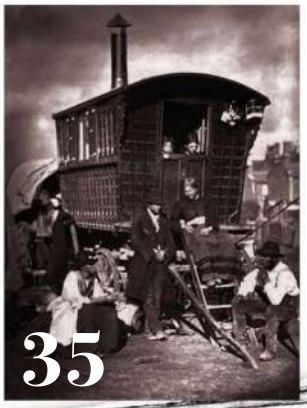

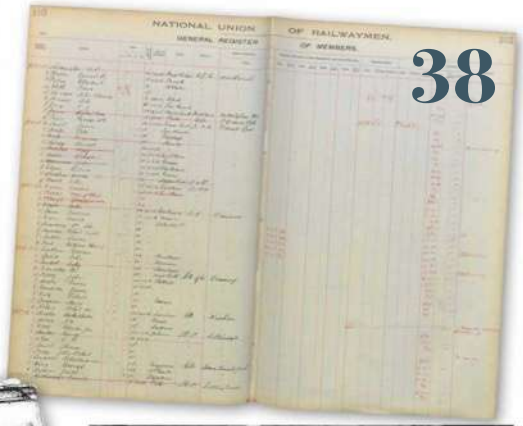

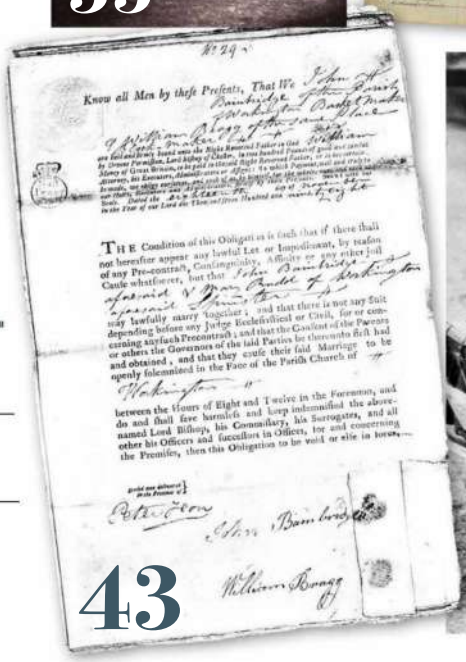

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ROTHERHAM POLICE COURT.

Monday.—Present—G. W. Chambers, Esq. (in the chair), C. Watney, Esq., and R. Chambers, Esq.

A Whiston Man Charged with Bigamy.—John Dawes, mason, Whiston, was charged with marrying Mary Wright, widow, Whiston, his first wife, Ann Redfern, being still alive. It is stated that the prisoner, at the age of 21, was first married on the 9th October, 1853, to Ann Redfern, aged 19, factory girl, at Sutton-in-Ashfield, where both parties then resided. They afterwards separated, and for over eleven years prisoner has resided at Whiston, near Rotherham, and in November last married the prosecutrix at Sheffield, representing himself as an unmarried man.—Mr. Supt. Hammond applied for a remand for a week in order that the attendance of witnesses might be secured.—Mary Wright, the prosecutrix, said that she was married to John Dawes, the prisoner, on the 5th November last, at St. Luke's Church, Dyer's hill, Sheffield. She had since found out that his first wife was alive. When she taxed him with being a married man he at once denied it. She was very uneasy, and went to Mansfield, where she saw prisoner's first wife. Afterwards, prisoner again denied that he had been married, and she wrote to his first wife, asking her to send her maiden name, the name of the church where the marriage took place, and other particulars; but the letter had not been answered. Before she was married the prisoner was living in lodgings; the furniture in her house was her own.—Prisoner cross-examined witness as to whether he had not said that he had not been married, to which in the affirmative.—He then asked but as this was out of the question he would remand, himself in a surety of £5, and a second of £5.

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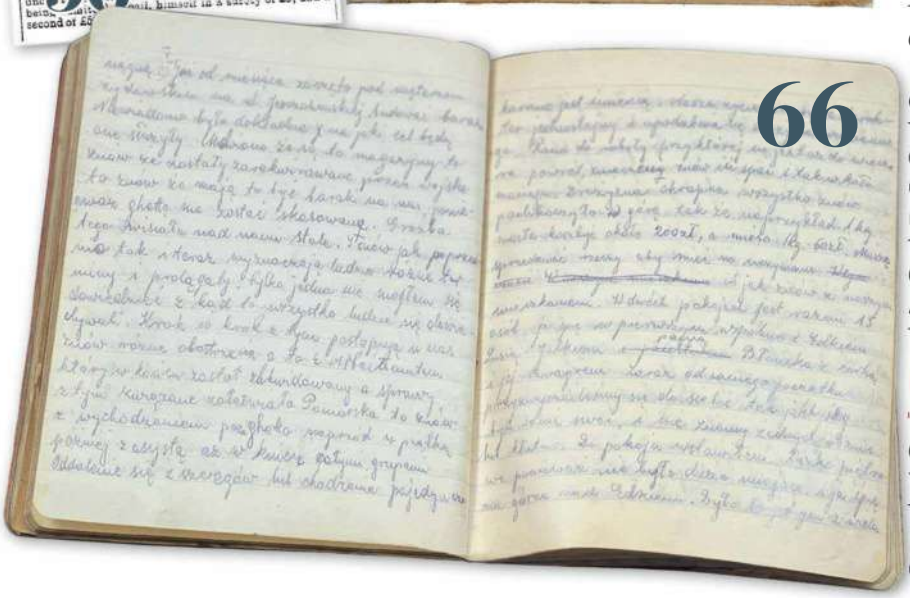

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The writer of our star letter wins an AncestryDNA test **worth £79** – so drop us a line and share your thoughts with us.

Emotional Discoveries At Porthcawl Museum

STAR LETTER

I volunteer at our town's museum where I hold the position of vice chair, and I would like to suggest that your readers consider local museums as a source for family history, as the following story demonstrates.

Birmingham-based, Polish-born vet Dr Bartosz 'Bart' Nietrzeba has, for several years, visited the grave of his great uncle Sergeant Piotr Olgierd Strycharek, a Polish pilot in the Royal Air Force who is buried at Nottage Cemetery in Porthcawl, Bridgend.

Following a recent internet search, he visited the volunteer-run Porthcawl Museum (**porthcawlmuseum.com**), where he made some emotional discoveries.

The museum dedicates a section of its exhibition space to the memory of the Allied airmen who were lost while stationed at RAF Stormy Down, Porthcawl, in the Second World War. Stormy Down served a very important role in the training of both air and ground crews. In total more than 10,000 aircrew passed through the school. In addition, it trained Commonwealth and Allied aircrew to fly with the RAF.

Taking centre stage in this exhibition is one of the propellers from Sergeant Strycharek's aircraft, along with his photo and biography. This was a moving moment of discovery for Bart, who had no previous knowledge of the item's existence.

Sergeant Strycharek was an instructor at 7 Air Gunnery School at RAF Stormy Down while serving in the Polish Air Force.

In September 1943 he was returning to base after a gunnery exercise over the sea off Porthcawl. The Avro Anson he was piloting collided with a Westland Lysander which had just taken off from Stormy Down.

Besides the two pilots and the Lysander tow operator, four air gunners in the Anson were also killed in the accident, one of whom is also buried in Nottage Cemetery.

During the course of the war a total of 52 airmen and a member of the Auxiliary Territorial Service – from Britain, Canada, New Zealand and Poland – were lost at Stormy Down, 11 of whom are buried at Nottage Cemetery. Since 2017 Porthcawl Museum, working with the Royal British Legion, holds a service of remembrance on the site over the Armistice weekend.

Dr Bart Nietrzeba stands beside one of the propellers of his great uncle's plane in Porthcawl Museum

Piotr Strycharek was born in 1914 to Franciszek and Katarzyna, both farmers. In around 1931 he enrolled into the Polish Air Force Officer School in Dęblin. He reached the UK as part of General Anders' so-called "Army of Hope", later the 2nd Polish Corps, who were incorporated into the British Eighth Army.

Porthcawl Museum has had many Polish visitors including the then UK ambassador Arkady Rzegocki, who visited in 2021 to place a wreath at the base of the propellor.

Bart told the museum that his great uncle is a person of admiration among all his family members. "My grandmother had a book listing all of the pilots serving in the Polish Army, and she had a bookmark where his name was. She was very proud of his dedication and heroism. She always told me that he was buried somewhere in the UK and that she always wished she could visit, but due to her poor health she never could. I have been visiting his grave on her behalf since I came to the UK in 2008."

All his relatives are very proud and very grateful to the whole team at the museum for commemorating his memory, and that of other members of the Polish Air Force.
David Swidenbank, by email

Editor Replies This is why we need museums like Porthcawl, to safeguard such artefacts and tell these stories. Do other readers volunteer at their local museum? And does anyone find that their family history skills are useful when talking to visitors?

Women's Wills

Following from the mentions, in the November issue, of Cambridgeshire ('Around Britain') and wills ('Eureka Moment'), I wanted to share my experience of Cambridgeshire wills.

My great great grandmother was Susan Rule, born in the Cambridgeshire village of Balsham in 1818. With the aid of the parish register transcripts made by the Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire Family History Society (**chfhs.org.uk**), the Rule family can be traced back in the village to my 11x great grandmother Elizabeth Rule, who was buried there, a widow, on 4 April 1589. The burial register spells her name Rewle, but this is clearly the same name when you allow for the idiosyncrasies of rural accents.

The parish fell within the probate jurisdiction of the Bishop of Ely. The British Record Society has published a number of indexes to wills (see **https://www.britishrecordsociety.org/publications**). That for the diocese of Ely runs to three volumes, but is easy to use, being organised by surname, given name and date. So you can quickly check if an ancestor from the area left a will proved in that consistory court.

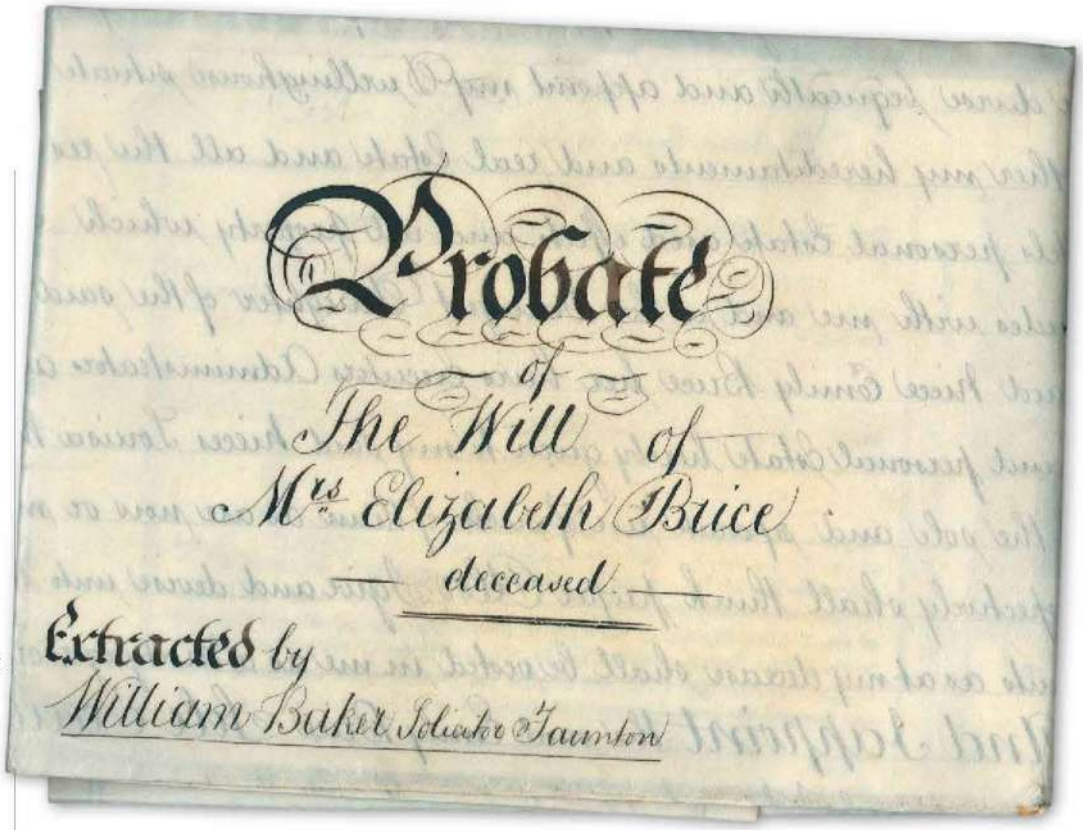
In it, I found a will listed for Elizabeth Rewle, a widow from Balsham. The wills from the Diocese of Ely are now held at Cambridgeshire Archives, and it was fascinating to view them.

Some wills are annoyingly brief: I found one man who left all his (unspecified) property to his wife, whom he did not name in his will, and we get no idea how well off he might have been.

Although Elizabeth Rule's (Rewle's) burial in 1589 is recorded in the Balsham parish register, neither her marriage nor baptism is, as the surviving register starts at the accession of Elizabeth I in 1558.

However, from the bequests she makes in her will, to her children and grandchildren, it seems likely that she was born in the 1510s.

Peter Jackson, by email



Peter reminds us that you should always check if your female forebear left a will, as Elizabeth Brice did in our example

Editor Replies **Thank you for sending this in Peter, including your transcription of Elizabeth's will which we did not have space to publish. As you say, she included the names of so many of her children and grandchildren. It must have been a very exciting discovery, and I love the detail of who got which sheets and which blankets. If widows or spinsters left wills, they were much more likely to have been proved under local jurisdiction rather than Canterbury or York, so it's definitely worth having a look for them. It's also worth noting that Findmypast has the British Record Society's index of Ely wills that you mention (bit.ly/fmp-wills-indexes-cambs).**

Sara MacAlister responded to a post about our online guide to Post Office records: tinyurl.com/wdytya-post

Thanks for the link. Just found my late father-in-law's record. He joined in 1947 at 26 as a postman, and spent the rest of his working life there until he retired as a driver.

Will Website Woes

In the article in your Christmas issue suggesting family history projects, you advise using the site **probatesearch.service.gov.uk/#wills** to find and order a will proved after 1857. I have used this service successfully on several occasions. However, in the last two weeks while trying to order a will from 1891 the website fails when I am directed to payment. I have sent feedback to the website with requests that they contact me to show that they have received and read the emails, but they never reply.

I have tried to use the website on both my laptop and tablet with the same outcome, ie failure to connect to the payment facility.

Brian Nicholls, by email

Editor Replies **Thank you for writing in Brian. I immediately hopped on to order a will after receiving your email and didn't have a problem, but I would really like to know if other people have had difficulty ordering a will recently. The website has had various problems before.**

The Case Of The Missing Truss

Not all stories of the First World War are ones of tragedy, and this is one such story.

My great uncle Reginald Fairburn, or to put it in military terms 41043 Private Fairburn R of the 8th Batt. York and Lancaster Regiment, was summoned to appear at a court-martial on 4 May 1918. What was his crime? Did he fall asleep on duty, or did he run away in the face of the enemy, or was he insubordinate to an officer, or was it for cowardice? No, his 'crime' was that he lost his truss!

For this offence he was ordered by Lieutenant Colonel RV Cowey DSO to explain to the court the circumstances under which the truss supplied by the Army was lost. He was facing a major and two lieutenants, whereas Reginald had no one to help him – he had to represent himself with no experience of military procedure. It must have been a terrifying experience for him.

When asked why he had lost army property he said, "The doctor told me to take if off when I stooped or lay down. I could not, therefore, take it into the trenches and left it in my valise at the stores about 8 October 1917. I was wounded later and did not return to the stores so was unable to get it." His very short statement must have wiped the smirks off those pompous officers' faces, as they could not argue against the medical officer's order.

So Great Uncle Reg was found to be innocent of any misconduct and was free to carry on with his duties, with the Army supplying a replacement truss.

I am sure that the officers did not like having a rank-and-file soldier get one over on them, and so they very soon transferred him to the Russian Front where troops were needed. But you cannot keep a good Yorkshireman down, and after serving there Reg came home to be demobbed with a glowing reference from his commanding officer.

So in the end, Reginald Fairburn, who died aged 77 in 1970, came out on top and had the last laugh.

Ashley Howard, Hull, East Yorkshire

Editor Replies What a great family story! It just shows what can be revealed in the records.

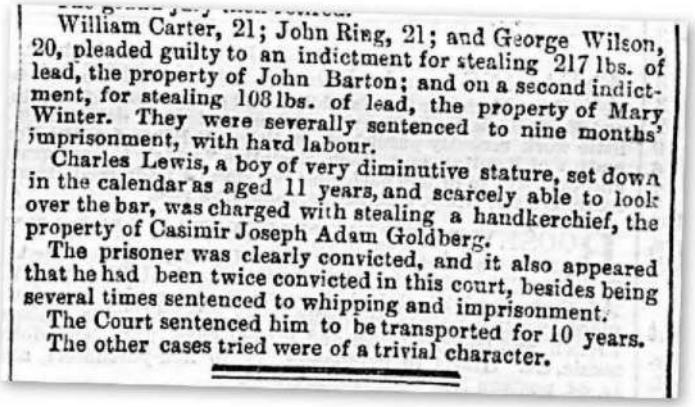
Scottish Women

Further to your November issue, it might have been worth a mention in Laura Berry's article about researching your female lines that by using Scottish records it's very easy to trace your female ancestors. This surely should have been mentioned for people in England who discover that they have Scottish ancestry.

In addition, parish clerks are equally vital for Scottish records!

Jim Adamson, by email

Editor Replies You are right Jim, it's much easier tracing women in Scottish records, not least because they often continued to use their maiden name. As for Chloe O'Shea's article in the same issue about the Online Parish Clerks project, at the moment there are only affiliated projects in England. If anyone knows of similar volunteer projects running in Scotland, we would love to hear about them.



William Carter, 21; John Ring, 21; and George Wilson, 20, pleaded guilty to an indictment for stealing 217 lbs. of lead, the property of John Barton; and on a second indictment, for stealing 108 lbs. of lead, the property of Mary Winter. They were severally sentenced to nine months' imprisonment, with hard labour.

Charles Lewis, a boy of very diminutive stature, set down in the calendar as aged 11 years, and scarcely able to look over the bar, was charged with stealing a handkerchief, the property of Casimir Joseph Adam Goldberg.

The prisoner was clearly convicted, and it also appeared that he had been twice convicted in this court, besides being several times sentenced to whipping and imprisonment.

The Court sentenced him to be transported for 10 years.

The other cases tried were of a trivial character.

David was shocked to read about the sentence that 11-year-old Charles Lewis received after being convicted in 1850 of stealing a handkerchief

Punishing Children

I was interested in Mary Jones' 'Reader Story' in the Christmas issue about her relative Michael Collins, who first appeared before magistrates in 1857 aged seven for stealing coal, and in 1859 aged 10 was sentenced to a fortnight in gaol followed by five years in a reformatory. Mary found it shocking to imagine a seven-year-old standing in the dock. But perhaps Michael got off lightly for the time?

I found a shocking story when researching Casimir Goldberg (1822–1883) who was the master brewer at the Great Haywood Brewery, Staffordshire, in the early 1850s. He was born in Warsaw, came to England in 1841, became a naturalised British subject in 1847 and a freemason in 1860.

Casimir was mentioned in the following article which appeared in the *Morning Herald* (London) on 20 February 1850 under the heading "Middlesex Sessions".

"Charles Lewis, a boy of very diminutive stature, set down in the calendar as aged 11 years, and scarcely able to look over the bar, was charged with stealing a handkerchief, the property of Casimir Joseph Adam Goldberg.

"The prisoner was clearly convicted, and it also appeared that he had been twice convicted in this court, besides being several times sentenced to whipping and imprisonment.

"The Court sentenced him to be transported for 10 years."

Perhaps if he had come before the magistrates a few years later, he would have benefited from a more humane approach?

David Jones, Albrighton

Editor Replies I couldn't resist looking into Charles' fate. It seems that he wasn't transported in the end, but was sent to Parkhurst Prison on the Isle of Wight (Findmypast has wrongly labelled the record Pankhurst Prison). The prison was opened in 1838 to cater for young male offenders. He was released on licence on 21 May 1855. I wonder what happened to him after that? I hope he had a better life. Perhaps a reader could find out? I should add that this newspaper is one of the many that are now free to view on the British Newspaper Archive (britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk).

@AllThoseBefore enjoyed a genealogical podcast
I've just listened to *Unearth the Past* presented by @DrMichalaHulme with guest @GenealogyJude. Some fascinating stories from Jude. A lovely start to the week.

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What's On

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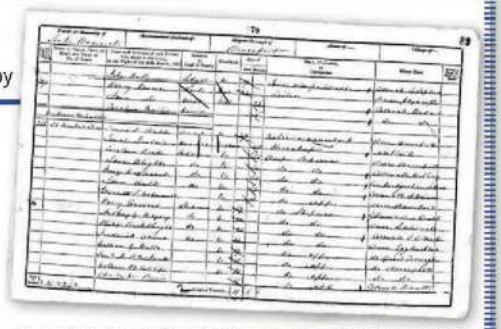
PICK OF THE MONTH

This online course is aimed at beginners to the hobby

Stage 1 Family History Skills Course

Starts 6 January

w **tinyurl.com/sog-stage-one**



Learn how to use fascinating records, like the census

If your New Year's resolution is to get to grips with your family history, this 12-week course from the Society of Genealogists – explaining the essential records for genealogy, where to find them and how you can use them to unlock the secrets of your ancestry – could be just the ticket. The topics covered include getting started, civil registration records, census records, military records, reading old documents and archival research, helping you to add generations to your tree and really understand the historic documents available, many of which are online. £240 including a year's associate membership of the society, £192 for existing members.

IN PERSON

Wales To The World

Until 24 February

a The Riverside Gallery, Haverfordwest

t 01437 775244

w **pembrokeshire.gov.uk/the-riverside-information/wales-to-the-world**

Don't miss this chance to see some of the maps from the more than 1.5 million objects included in the National Map Collection in Aberystwyth. The selection ranges from the oldest map in the National Library of Wales to newly commissioned artworks, funded by the Welsh government's Anti-racist Wales Action Plan. Free.

After Life: A History Of Death

Until 5 July

a Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh

t 0131 225 7324

w **rcpe.ac.uk/heritage/after-life-history-death**

This exhibition explores changing views of death from antiquity to the present day, using documents including an original copy of Napoleon Bonaparte's postmortem and a broadside from 1829 proclaiming the execution of Edinburgh bodysnatcher William Burke. Free.

Boxers, Bandits And A Blind Beggar

6 January

a Dartford Science and Technology College

t 01322 527604

w **tinyurl.com/nwkfhs-boxers**

Discover the history of Bethnal Green in London with this talk from Ian Bevan. Free to North West Kent Family History Society members, non-members and guests asked to make a donation.

Fife Collections Centre Behind The Scenes Tour

10 January

a Bankhead Park, Glenrothes

t 01592 583352

w **onfife.com/venues/fife-collections-centre/**

On this guided tour you will encounter some of the treasures among the 250,000 objects and documents in Fife Collections Centre, and learn how the archivists look after them. Free, advance booking required.

Lost At Sea

25 January

a The Pavilion, Upton-by-Chester

e *chester@fhsc.org.uk*

w **fhsc.org.uk/about-the-group-chester-2.html**

Carolyn Barnwell will talk about how a message written on a family photograph led to some surprising discoveries. £2 for members of the Family History Society of Cheshire Chester Group, £3 for visitors.

ONLINE

Researching Welsh Ancestors

11 January

w **tinyurl.com/eventbrite-researching-welsh**

Genealogist Gill Thomas explains how to research Welsh family history with this Glamorgan Family History Society talk. Free.

Censuses

12 January

w **tinyurl.com/eventbrite-secrets-of-tna-cens**

A census has been taken in England and Wales, and separately for Scotland, every 10 years since 1801, except for 1941. In the first of a series of monthly talks under the 'Secrets of The National Archives' banner, TNA's Jessamy Carlson explores the history and importance of census documents. Pay what you can, £5 suggested.

Norfolk Record Office

16 and 22 January

w **norfolkrecordofficeblog.org/events-winter-2023-4/**

NRO is running the research workshops 'Advanced Family History: Part 1' and 'Advanced Family History: Part 2' (both 16 January, 10am and 2pm respectively) and 'Introduction to Family History' (22 January). £5 each, free to Norfolk Archives and Heritage Development Foundation supporters.

The Old Poor Law Workshop

20 January

w **tinyurl.com/berksfhs-dils**

In this workshop from Berkshire Family History Society Joan Dils will explore the Old Poor Law system before 1834, the records it created and their usefulness. Pre-booking required. £10.

Muster Rolls And Pay Lists At The National Archives With Paul Nixon

23 January

w **tinyurl.com/ihgs-tna-muster**

Discover how to research your army ancestors in this tutorial from the Institute of Heraldic and Genealogical Studies. £10.

Virtual Family History Fair

27 January

w **eastsurreyfhs.org.uk/index.php/events**

You can meet members of various family history societies at this online event from the East Surrey Family History Society. Free.

BOOK AHEAD

The biggest event in the family history calendar is back

RootsTech

29 February to 2 March

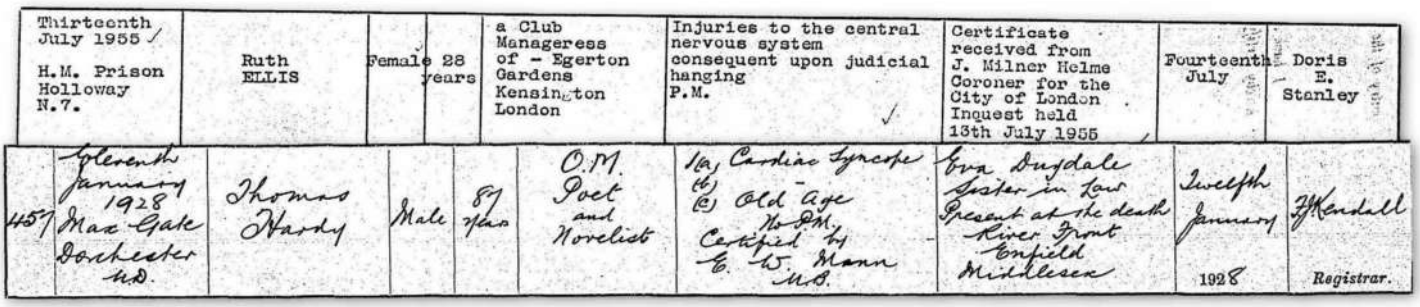
a Salt Palace Convention Center, Salt Lake City, Utah, USA

w **familysearch.org/en/rootstech/**

RootsTech, the world's largest family history conference, is returning at the end of February, and if you can't make it to Utah virtual passes allow attendees from around the world to take part in many of the events from the comfort of their own home. $69 one-day pass, $109 three-day pass, virtual passes free.

News

Rosemary Collins reports on data releases and genealogy news



Thirteenth July 1955 ✓ H.M. Prison Holloway N.7.	Ruth ELLIS	Female	28 years	a Club Manageress of - Egerton Gardens Kensington London	Injuries to the central nervous system consequent upon judicial hanging P.M. ✓	Certificate received from J. Milner Helme Coroner for the City of London Inquest held 13th July 1955	Fourteenth July	Doris E. Stanley	
1457	Eleventh January 1928 Max Gate Dorchester	Thomas Hardy	Male	87 years	O.M. Poet and Novelist	1a, Cardiac Syncope (b) (c) Old Age No P.M. Certified by C. D. Mann M.B.	Eva Drysdale Sister in Law Present at the death River Front Enfield Middlesex	Twelfth January 1928	J. Kendall Registrar.

GRO expands death-record access

The General Register Office (GRO) has improved access to civil death records via its online view service.

The GRO holds the civil birth, marriage and death records for England and Wales, and birth records from 1837–1934 and 1984–2021 and death records from 1837–1957 and 1984–2021 are indexed on its website (**www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/**).

Previously, the cheapest way to access them was as PDFs, available for £7, which took up to four working days to be delivered.

In July, the GRO made birth records from 1837–1922 and death records from 1837–1887 available as digital images, which cost £2.50 and can be downloaded immediately.

Access to death records has now been expanded to include records dating from 1888–1957.

This allows family researchers to view ancestors' deaths more cheaply, as well as the deaths of notable figures.

For example, the new instant-access records include the deaths of novelist Thomas Hardy in 1928 and Ruth Ellis, the last woman to be hanged in the UK, in 1955 *(both records pictured above)*.

A 2020 impact assessment by the Home Office, which runs the GRO (**www.legislation.gov.uk/ukia/2020/64/pdfs/ukia_20200064_en.pdf**), said that the Government's preferred option for GRO records was to "Introduce an online view (OV) service". Digitising GRO records was estimated to cost £43 million over 10 years, and the assessment added, "It is envisaged that as more records are digitised, the PDF service will be eventually replaced by the online view service."

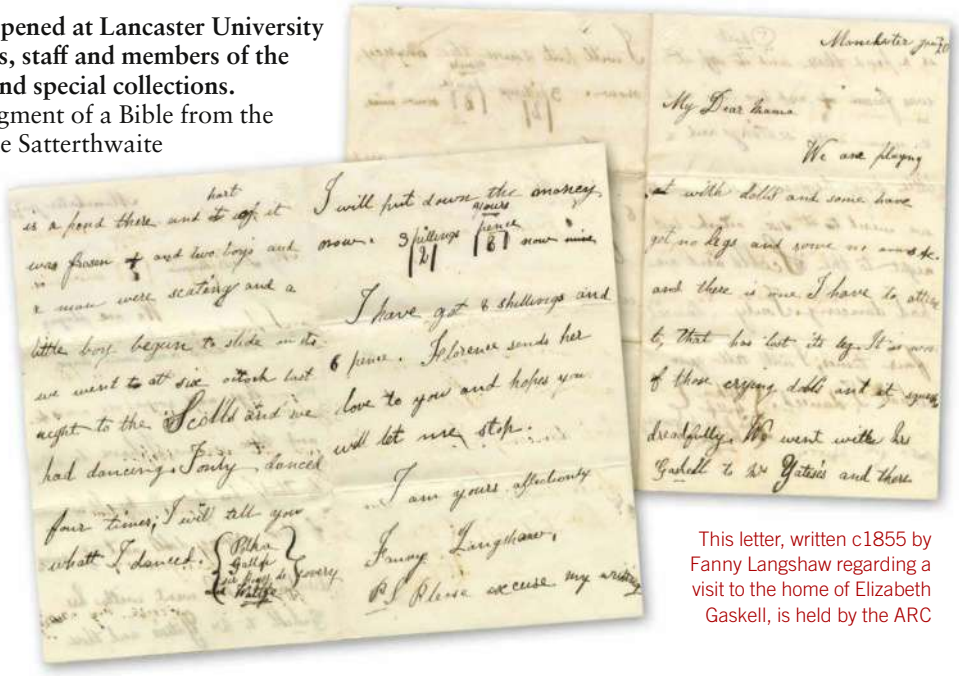
The Home Office has also now issued a tender for scanning and transcription services at the GRO at a cost of £38 million (**www.find-tender.service.gov.uk/Notice/010142-2023**). However, a Home Office spokesperson said, "There are no plans at this time to extend the years available to this service or PDFs."

Archives Research Centre opens at Lancaster University

A new Archives Research Centre (ARC) opened at Lancaster University Library on 7 November, allowing students, staff and members of the public to access the university's archives and special collections.

The oldest item in the collection is a fragment of a Bible from the 13th century. Other collections include the Satterthwaite Letter Books (1737–1782), a collection of letters from a Lancastrian father and son working in Barbados; Socialist Party pamphlets from the 1880s to 1997; Second World War pamphlets detailing a unique social history linked to the home front; and the Austin, Paley & Langshaw Collection, which includes recently discovered letters from the novelist Elizabeth Gaskell (1810–1865) and Lancaster-born palaeontologist Sir Richard Owen (1804–1892).

The ARC will be open on a drop-in basis on Wednesdays. You can find out more details at **lancaster.ac.uk/library/collections/special-collections-and-archives**.



This letter, written c1855 by Fanny Langshaw regarding a visit to the home of Elizabeth Gaskell, is held by the ARC

LANCASTER UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

NEWS IN BRIEF

This pensions register dates from 1703

Ancestry adds Royal Hospital Chelsea records

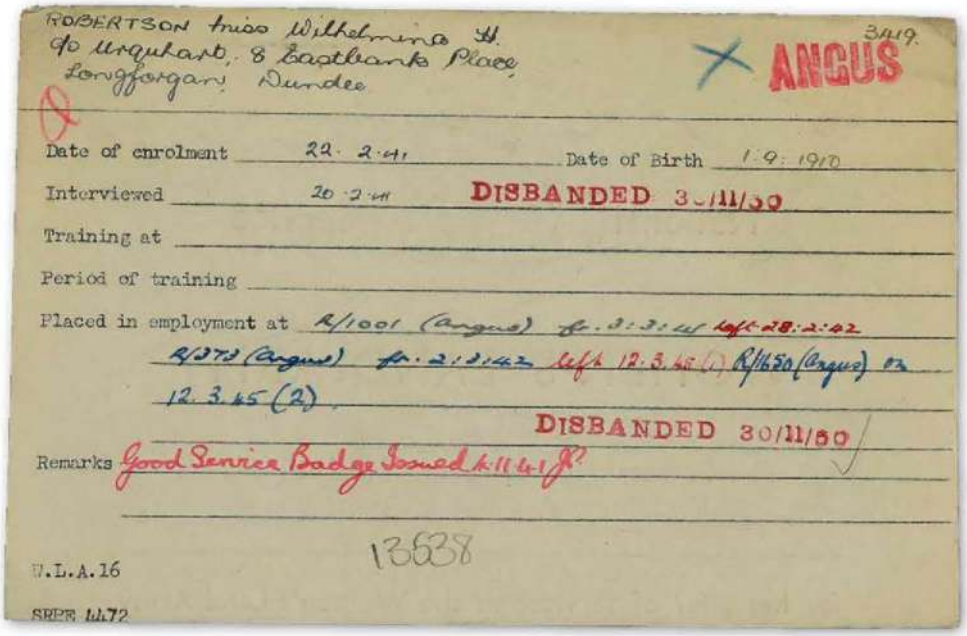
Family history website Ancestry (**ancestry.co.uk**) has added a new collection of Royal Hospital Chelsea admission books, registers and papers. The collection dates from 1702–1980 and consists of 680,094 records. As well as providing a home for military veterans, the Royal Hospital was the administrative centre for British Army pensions until 1955. The new Ancestry collection includes records of 'in-pensioners', who lived at the hospital, and 'out-pensioners', who lived elsewhere but received their pensions from it.

More blue plaques, like this example from London, will be erected across England

Blue plaque scheme expanded across England

Communities across England will be able to nominate historically significant people from their area to be commemorated with an iconic blue plaque. The 2023 Levelling Up and Regeneration Act has given Historic England (**historicengland.org.uk**) responsibility for installing them across England – currently blue plaques outside London are installed by local organisations. Duncan Wilson, CEO of Historic England, said that the scheme will "celebrate heritage across England". English Heritage will continue to install blue plaques in the capital.

GETTY IMAGES / IBCC



One of the Women's Land Army records that is now available digitally from ScotlandsPeople

Scottish Women's Land Army records released

Records of women who served in the Scottish Women's Land Army (WLA) and Women's Timber Corps (WTC) have been digitised and released online.

The records have been added to ScotlandsPeople (**scotlandspeople.gov.uk**), the records website of the National Records of Scotland (NRS).

The WLA and WTC were both established during the Second World War to recruit women to work on farms and in forestry, replacing men who'd been called up to serve in the armed forces.

Each record consists of a card noting details such as the woman's date of enrolment, date of interview, place and period of training, and place where she was employed.

The NRS has released 9,719 records, covering all women born in or before 1922. To abide by data-protection laws, records covering individuals born in 1923 will be released on 1 January 2024. The records, consisting of nearly 20,000 in total, will continue to be released annually.

Users must purchase credits to view records on ScotlandsPeople. The WLA and WTC records cost six credits (£1.50) each.

The WLA records for England and Wales were published on commercial family history site Ancestry in autumn 2022. The collection is available to Ancestry members at **ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/62020/**.

CAN YOU HELP?

The International Bomber Command Centre (IBCC) in Lincoln is appealing for volunteers around the world to help compile, photograph and geo-locate memorials to members of RAF Bomber Command.

The Memorials Project started in 2017 and has now successfully recorded all known memorials to Bomber Command in the UK, covering Bomber Command's entire existence (1936–1968), including stained-glass windows, sculptures and plaques.

It has created 190,000 records altogether, which have been inputted into the IBCC Losses Database (**https://internationalbcc.co.uk/history/losses-database/**).

This memorial to Bomber Command is located in Bodicote, Oxfordshire

The next step is to capture memorials in Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Eire, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Sweden and Switzerland, so volunteers are sought in these countries.

Please email *info@internationalbcc.co.uk* with "Memorials" in the subject line for details.

Historian identifies star of album cover

A historian has identified the unknown Victorian man who appears on the cover of Led Zeppelin's fourth studio album, released in 1971.

The untitled album is known as *Led Zeppelin IV*. The cover image *(pictured)* is a coloured photo of an old man with a bundle of sticks.

Brian Edwards, a visiting research fellow with the Regional History Centre at the University of the West of England (**uwe.ac.uk/research/centres-and-groups/regional-history**), has now found the original black-and-white photograph in an album of Victorian photos from Dorset, Somerset and Wiltshire.

The photograph depicts Lot Long (1823–1893), a thatcher. At the time the photo was taken, Long was a widower living in a small cottage in Shaftesbury Road, Mere, Wiltshire.

The photographer is thought to have been Ernest Howard Farmer (1856–1944), the first head of the School of Photography at the Regent Street Polytechnic, now part of the University of Westminster.

Maryland records go online

Civil records for the US state of Maryland have been released by nonprofit group Reclaim the Records (**www.reclaimtherecords.org**) following a Freedom of Information request. Available on the Internet Archive (**archive.org**) they consist of images of selected birth certificates from 1875–1922; the state birth index from 1898–1951; Baltimore birth indexes from 1875–1941 and 1950–1972; marriage certificates from 1914–1940, June 1951–1988 and 2007–2013; death certificates from 1898–2012;

Some of the newly released birth records

death indexes from 1898–1968 and 1973–2014; the Baltimore death index for 1875–1972; and the card index to immigration and naturalisation records for multiple courts in Baltimore (County 1796–1851 and City 1827–1933).

196,209
The number of Cumberland parish records that have been added to **findmypast.co.uk**

Westminster Synagogue
The synagogue is the new home of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain's library

Halik Kochanski
The historian's book *Resistance: The Underground War in Europe, 1939–45* has won the Wolfson History Prize

180,000
The number of prison register entries that have been added to Scotland's Criminal Database (**tinyurl.com/scottishindexes-scd**)

Diana Cecil
A portrait of the 17th-century noblewoman has been restored (**tinyurl.com/guardian-dcpor**)

Chad Varah
A lost plaque honouring the Samaritans' founder has been found in a garden shed (**tinyurl.com/bbc-news-chad**)

The Royal Arsenal in Woolwich, the former home of the Greenwich Heritage Centre

Campaigners demand the restoration of Greenwich's archive service

Local campaigners have started a petition calling on the Royal Borough of Greenwich Council to restore its archive service.

In 2018 the Greenwich Heritage Centre, based in the Royal Arsenal, closed. Museum and archive services were moved to the care of the Royal Greenwich Heritage Trust at Charlton House. Access to the archives is by appointment only, with charges for appointments of longer than half an hour.

The Greenwich Industrial History Society's petition at **tinyurl.com/change-org-gihs** says, "We urge Greenwich Council to restore a properly functioning archive and museum service to enable everyone to celebrate and research our heritage."

It was launched on 30 October 2023 and has 1,629 signatures at the time of writing.

A council spokesperson commented, "The archives did not close and are accessible through Royal Greenwich Heritage Trust, who continue to help an average of 77 researchers access the information they require per month. The Council works very closely with Royal Greenwich Heritage Trust to enable access to heritage material and we are supporting them in exploring options for a public reading room."

GETTY IMAGES / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

The Dawn Of Hope

Alan Crosby remembers how much New Year meant to our farming forebears

Have you ever wondered why 5 April is the start of the tax year in the UK? It's because it falls 11 days after 25 March, which is itself Lady Day or the Feast of the Annunciation. This marks the day when the archangel Gabriel told Mary that she was with child, and is exactly nine months before Christmas Day, the Feast of Christ's birth.

Another question: why the interval of 11 days? Answer: because in 1752 the reorganisation of the calendar, which was implemented so that the terrestrial date caught up with the astronomical cycle, meant that 11 days' worth of dates were 'lost', and 25 March became 5 April.

Yet another question: why does any of this matter to family historians? Answer: read on…

The reason why 25 March is so significant is that commemorating the moment of Christ's conception was, for the medieval Church, one of the two most important feasts of the liturgical year – the other being Easter, and the commemoration of Christ's death and resurrection. For this reason the church year, like Christ's existence, began on 25 March, and because the legal system was so closely linked with the Church that date also marked the new year for many aspects of the law.

The beginning of January was regarded as a time of rebirth

However, outside the somewhat arcane world of church administration and the bewildering complexities of the law, New Year was generally recognised by the people as being on 1 January, as it is today. This was 10 days after the shortest day and longest night, and during the intervening period the balance of light and dark, day and night, had seemed to stand still. But by 1 January there was a perceptible change, as the days were a few minutes longer and the dark nights just that little bit shorter. The cycle of the new year had begun.

So, there were two ways of defining 'new year' – one based on the length of the day, and the other on the calculated date of the conception of Our Lord. That is why we might well encounter documents that are dated in the style "18 January 1667/68". That means 1667 in the church year (which would continue to 24 March 1667) but also 1668 in the calendar year (which had begun on 1 January).

For most of our forebears these technical questions did not matter very much, if at all. Instead they were fully in tune with the changes in the natural world. To countless generations, the cold darkness of December had been perceived as a time when the world itself went to sleep, or was hibernating, or even dying. So the beginning of January, with hints of more light and the promise of warmer days to come, was regarded as a time of rebirth and renewal.

The celebrations were admittedly muted, since the festivities of Christmas had taken place only a few days earlier, and 6 January was another special day – Epiphany or Twelfth Night, the official end of the Christmas season. But New Year's Day was nevertheless a key moment. From then on, our ancestors watched anxiously for signs of spring – the first green shoots, the earliest slight warmth in the sunshine, the small birds singing and chattering – and they made ready for the essential tasks at the start of the farming year.

The first Monday after Epiphany was usually 'Plough Monday', when (weather permitting) the first field or strip was turned over, so that the clods and lumps of earth could be broken down and harrowed ready for sowing. That was a cause for a modest celebration… although it might have been overshadowed by worries about long, hard frosts, or the threat of snow, or the reality of torrential rain. A new year was nonetheless a time of hope and cautious optimism, accompanied by relief that the world itself was being renewed and revived.

ALAN CROSBY lives in Lancashire and is the editor of *The Local Historian*

ILLUSTRATION WWW.SUEGENT.COM

50 WEBSITES TO WATCH

GETTY IMAGES

Jonathan Scott presents our exclusive preview of the online family history resources you can't afford to miss in 2024

There's so much to look forward to in 2024. Perhaps the biggest highlight is the Second World War Ministry of Defence service records held by The National Archives, which Ancestry is busy digitising. We know that the firm has a target of completing digitisation by 2029, but we also know that the first tranche is expected some time in 2024. Since the 80th anniversary of the D-Day landings falls in June, perhaps that might be the time the company aims to release a first wave. We're only guessing, but will keep readers updated.

There are plenty of other upcoming anniversaries as well. One of the most notable is the 200th birthday of the creation of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution. It's also 40 years since the Miners' Strike; 50 years since ABBA won Eurovision; 70 years since the end of food rationing, Roger Bannister's four-minute mile, and the BBC's first daily TV news bulletin; 80 years since D-Day; and 170 years since Britain became involved in the Crimean War. Read on to find out which anniversaries are being marked by new record releases and find out what is coming online in 2024 that will help grow your family tree.

Soldiers demonstrating spotting chairs in 1939 – WW2 service records are just one of the highlights to look out for in 2024

Ancestry

w **ancestry.co.uk**

Earlier in 2023 it was announced that Ancestry had won the exclusive rights to digitise and publish more than three million Ministry of Defence service records held by The National Archives at Kew. Expect to see the first tranche coming online in 2024.

January will see pension records of postal workers, held by the Postal Museum; electoral registers from the North Yorkshire County Record Office; nonconformist registers from Hampshire; and electoral registers from Westminster.

War Diaries covering the allied invasion of Sicily, known as Operation Husky, in the Second World War are due in March, and into the spring watch out for Lancashire nonconformist registers, Teesside parish registers and Cheshire material in the summer.

Other material scheduled for the year includes Poor Law records from Gwent, Aberdeenshire court and school records, and employment records from the Irish Railway Record Society.

Anglo Italian Family History Society

w **anglo-italianfhs.org.uk**

The group will be refreshing its website with a new generation of researchers in mind – those who have uncovered Italian connections not through family stories of migration, but through DNA testing.

BillionGraves

w **billiongraves.com**

BillionGraves is beginning to use artificial intelligence to transcribe gravestone images, helping to tackle any photographs that have been in the queue for more than 45 days.

British History Online

w **british-history.ac.uk**

New digital versions of previously undigitised Victoria County History volumes will be added to BHO in 2024.

Partly funded by the charity the Marc Fitch Fund and the Institute of Historical Research (**history.ac.uk/research/victoria-county-history**), these provide encyclopaedic histories of parishes, towns and cities, from the earliest archaeological records to social, economic and religious histories, as well as topography and built environments. BHO is also publishing in print histories on Oxfordshire (Chipping Norton) and the first ever Westmorland volume (Kirkby Lonsdale).

British Museum

w **britishmuseum.org/collection**

The museum has announced its intention to digitise its entire collection. The first material is due to be added to its online catalogue in 2024.

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

w **cwgc.org/stories/home/**

Evermore: Stories of the Fallen was announced ahead of Remembrance Day 2023. The free portal, where users can upload stories and images, is funded by a grant from the Post Office Remembrance Fellowship, and the CWGC hopes it will become "the definitive resource of the stories of those who died in the world wars". It will be interesting to see how it develops, and how it will compare to the Imperial War Museum's earlier **livesofthefirstworldwar.iwm.org.uk**.

FamilySearch

w **familysearch.org**

One of the free website's priorities for 2024 will be to offer artificial-intelligence technology, such as computer-aided indexing, to archives and record collections. Staff also hope to provide more opportunities for users to volunteer through FamilySearch Get Involved. Finally, the site will again be participating in *Who Do You Think You Are? Magazine*'s popular annual indexing event Transcription Tuesday, which in 2024 will take place on 5 November.

GETTY IMAGES

Military

MyHeritage

w **bit.ly/myheritage-ibc**

The subscription behemoth recently added records of service members who died during service in the International Bomber Command of the UK and its allies (1936–1968).

Royal Logistics Corps Museum

w **royallogistic corps.co.uk/museum/**

The museum's collections are set to go live late in 2023, with improved access to regimental journals dating back to the 19th century, as well as enlistment books and photographs.

The Irish Great War Dead Archive

w **irelandsgreatwardead.ie**

The website's database is going to be updated to include all soldiers who died between August 1914 and August 1921 no matter the cause of death, which will add information on another 3,000 servicemen.

Western Front Association

w **www.western frontassociation.com**

TownsWeb Archiving's PastView platform is forming the backbone of the Western Front Association's new website, improving access to all sorts of resources including its highly regarded journal *Stand To!*.

GETTY IMAGES

Findmypast

w **findmypast.co.uk**

Although Findmypast's historic newspapers have never been so easy to search (see page 52), the search facility will still be a focus for the coming year. Staff are working to extract family history information from its bank of 72 million newspaper pages, including family notices. The data will then be launched as a fully searchable dataset. Meanwhile, titles that will be added to the collection, as well as on sister site British Newspaper Archive (**britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk**), include *National World* and *Country Life*.

Elsewhere watch out for a completely refreshed companion app, and new material through partnerships with the Family History Federation, Libraries and Archives Canada, the British Library, the Catholic Heritage Archive and the National Trust.

Hearth Tax Digital

w **gams.uni-graz.at/context:htx**

Hearth Tax Digital has been expanding its coverage in the past few years, with Lancashire going live as we went to press, adding data on 32,000 households, joining County Durham, Essex, Kent, Lancashire, Warwickshire, Westmorland, Wiltshire and Yorkshire, and including rich data on London on the eve of the Great Fire in 1666. In 2024 the team are planning to add records for other counties, notably Hertfordshire, extending coverage around the M25 zone.

HSBC History

w **history.hsbc.com/exhibitions/a-bank-at-war**

The website has had a range of enhancements over the past year, particularly focused on the search function. You can now delve into staff magazines, explore 4,000 individual war cards, and visit an exhibition on the role of female workers. In 2024 the site will be uploading more content from the HSBC's vault, and completing a trilogy of exhibitions providing an in-depth look at the bank's story through the Second World War.

Ireland Genealogy Projects

w **igp-web.com**

This site's headstone project already boasts more than 174,000 images and has a couple of thousand pending, as well as more church records being transcribed by volunteers.

Lloyd's Register Foundation

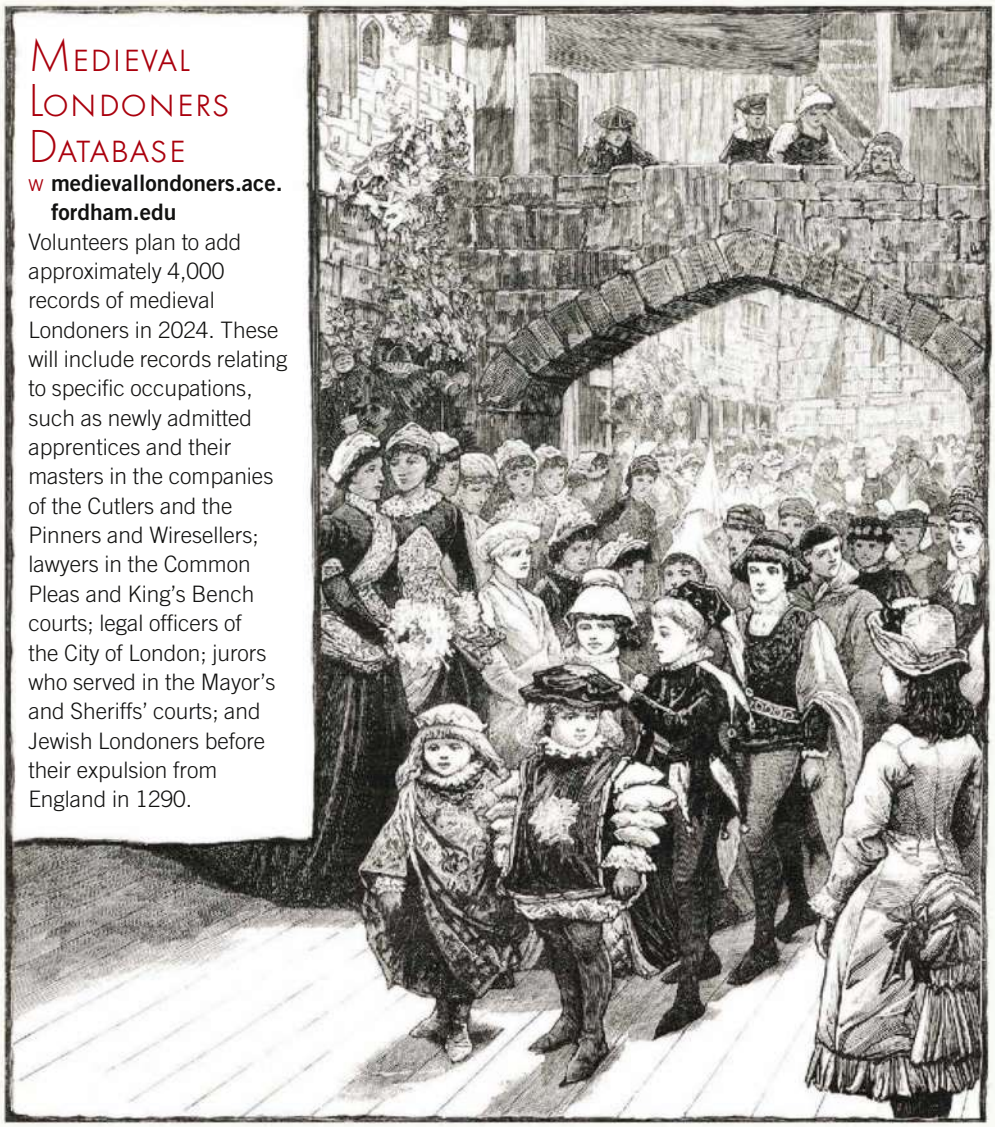
w **hec.lr foundation.org.uk**

You can explore historical editions of the Lloyd's Register of Ships, casualty returns and the combined catalogue via the Heritage and Education Centre's homepage, while thousands more documents, plans and photos are expected to join the massive Ship Plan and Survey Reports Collection.

Medieval Londoners Database

w **medievallondoners.ace.fordham.edu**

Volunteers plan to add approximately 4,000 records of medieval Londoners in 2024. These will include records relating to specific occupations, such as newly admitted apprentices and their masters in the companies of the Cutlers and the Pinners and Wiresellers; lawyers in the Common Pleas and King's Bench courts; legal officers of the City of London; jurors who served in the Mayor's and Sheriffs' courts; and Jewish Londoners before their expulsion from England in 1290.



Modern Records Centre

w **warwick.ac.uk/services/library/mrc**

Ephemera from the 1984–1985 Miners' Strike, such as leaflets and posters, should be live by March. The MRC is also cataloguing the archives of the National Union of Mineworkers as part of a three-year digitisation project.

National Archives Of Australia

w **tinyurl.com/naa-gov-au-ww2**

The archive has been overseeing the mass digitisation of its Second World War records for five years. Over the next few months it should complete the final tranche of 45,000 service records, which will be available online for free.

National Burial Grounds Survey

w **agintl.org/burial-ground-management-survey/**

In 2020 the Church of England announced that its burial grounds would be laser-scanned and made searchable, and surveying firm Atlantic Geomatics says that the first diocese should be released by summer/autumn 2024. The mapping and permissible records will be free to access.

National Library Of Scotland

w **www.nls.uk**

The NLS has pledged that a third of its holdings will be available in digital format by 2025. For now, the ever-expanding site **maps.nls.uk** is due to add all main flat-sheet maps of Ireland in the first few months of 2024. Staff are also planning 100,000 new Ordnance Survey maps of England and Wales, including the very detailed 1:1,250 and 1:2,500 charts from the 1940s to the 1970s – some of the earliest to show house numbers comprehensively. Finally a Virtual Reading Room has launched to help remote researchers: **www.nls.uk/using-the-library/reading-rooms/view-material-online/**.

National Library Of Wales

w **library.wales/peacepetition**

In April 2023 a Peace Petition signed by almost 400,000 Welsh women 100 years earlier was returned to Wales. Work to catalogue and digitise the petition is now under way, with the first results already available to browse. Staff will be embarking on a national effort to transcribe the names via the NLW's crowdsourcing platform. Meanwhile they've created SNARC (Semantic Name Authority Repository Cymru), a database of more than 25,000 people linked to catalogue entries, images and biographies: **https://snarc-llgc.wikibase.cloud/wiki/Main_Page**.

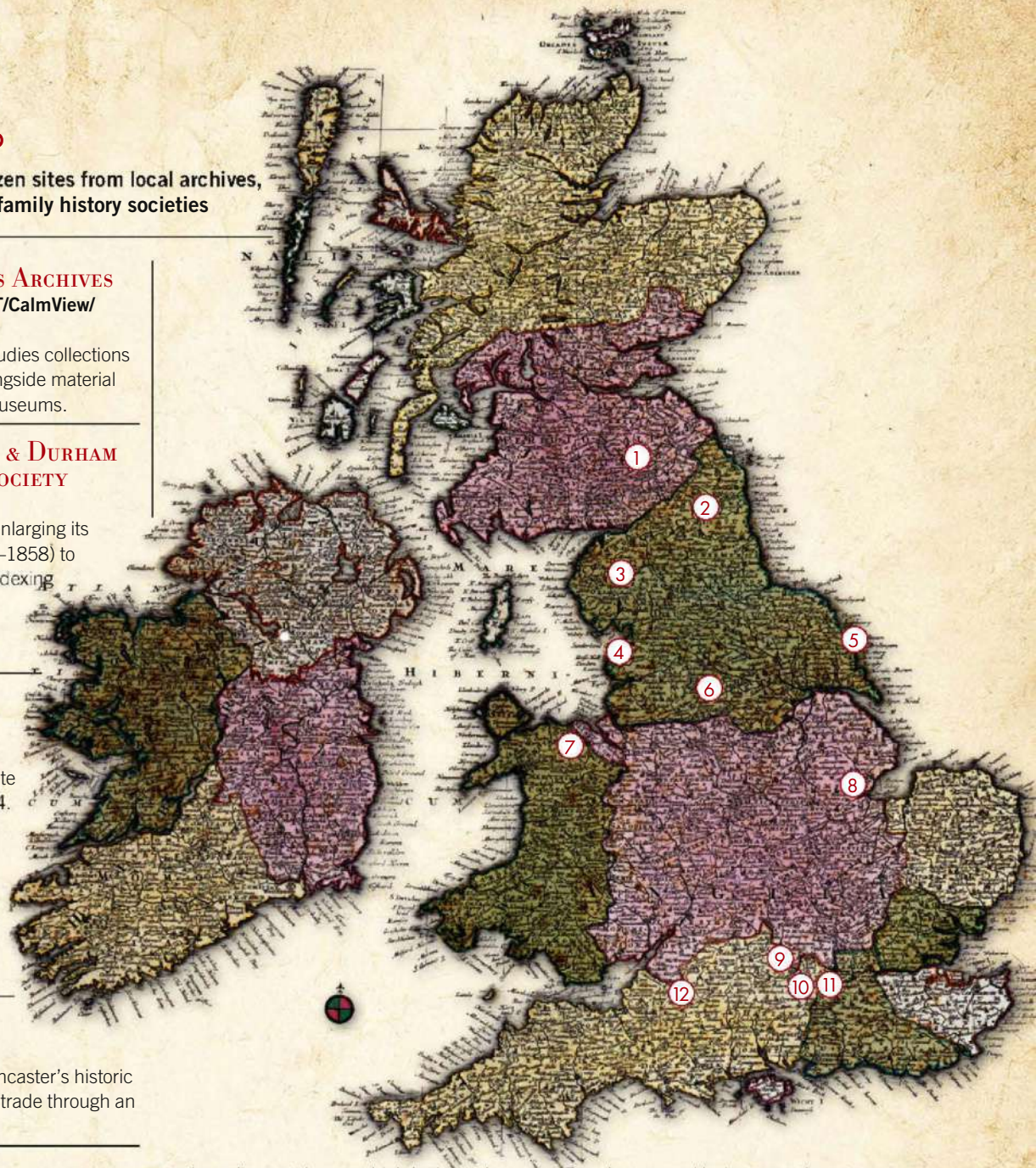
Newspapers.com

w **newspapers.com**

In 2024 the site plans to add millions of pages from regional newspapers that were published in the UK and Ireland. It launched in Australian currency this year, and Canadian currency is coming next, so expect more titles from both countries as well.

Regional Round-up

Jonathan highlights a dozen sites from local archives, community projects and family history societies



1 Scottish Borders Archives

w **calmview.eu/HUBCAT/CalmView/default.aspx**

The team are adding local-studies collections to their online catalogue, alongside material that is held by the region's museums.

2 Northumberland & Durham Family History Society

w **ndfhs.org.uk**

The family history society is enlarging its probate records index (1701–1858) to cover 1650–1700. It's also indexing promoters and defendants from the Bishop of Durham's Consistory Court.

3 Cumbria Family History Society

w **cumbriafhs.com**

The society is giving its website a complete makeover in 2024. When finished members and visitors will be able to find publications and database records via a county map, as well as use a unified surname search for more than 350,000 individuals.

4 Facing The Past

w **facingthepast.org**

This newcomer highlights Lancaster's historic role in the transatlantic slave trade through an interactive digital map.

5 Scarborough Atlas

w **scarboroughatlas.org**

Launched in September 2023, this website enables you to explore trails, stories and records that celebrate Scarborough's history.

6 West Yorkshire Archive Service

w **wyas.access.preservica.com**

West Yorkshire's new Preservica site hosts a growing selection of 'born digital' and digitised collections. Also volunteers are continuing to create transcripts from Anne Lister's diary, which can be searched via the catalogue.

7 Flintshire Memorials

w **newa.wales/collections/getrecord/GB208_D-DM_181**

North East Wales Archives was formed in April 2020 when Denbighshire and Flintshire archives came together. The Flintshire arm is currently in the process of uploading a First World War Flintshire Memorial Card Index to the online catalogue, which is due to be finished sometime in 2024.

8 Lincolnshire Archives

w **calmview.eu/lincolnshirearchives/calmview/default.aspx**

Replacing the old Lincs to the Past website, this improved catalogue is entering its second phase, now boasting half a million digitised images linked to about 100,000 records with many more being added in 2024.

9 Oxford History Centre

w **oxfordshire.gov.uk/heritagesearch**

As we went to press a further 1,800 images from the local newspaper *Oxford Journal Illustrated* were being added to the centre's website, covering wartime activity and local casualties in the years 1915 and 1916.

10 Surrey History Centre

w **surreycc.gov.uk/culture-and-leisure/history-centre**

People-powered indexes continue to pour online for Surrey researchers. Pupil registers of the School of Handicrafts for Destitute Boys in Chertsey are in the pipeline, plus patients admitted to the Royal Earlswood Asylum.

11 The Friends Of Horton Cemetery

w **hortoncemetery.org**

Here you can explore glass-plate photos of patients who died within the 'Epsom Cluster' of asylums. Their stories are being compiled by volunteers who are keen to commemorate those buried in Horton Cemetery.

12 Wiltshire And Swindon History Centre

w **jstor.org/site/wiltshire-and-swindon-history-centre**

The centre is adding content to the long-running digital library JSTOR. At the moment the focus is on Second World War material, with postcard collections on the way.

GETTY IMAGES

North East Jewish Heritage

w **twarchives.org.uk/about-us/unlocking-north-east-jewish-heritage**

This project has been tracking down Jewish communities' material held at Tyne & Wear Archives all year. The team are building a new platform in 2024 that will share the stories they've uncovered and provide access to digitised material.

Postal Museum

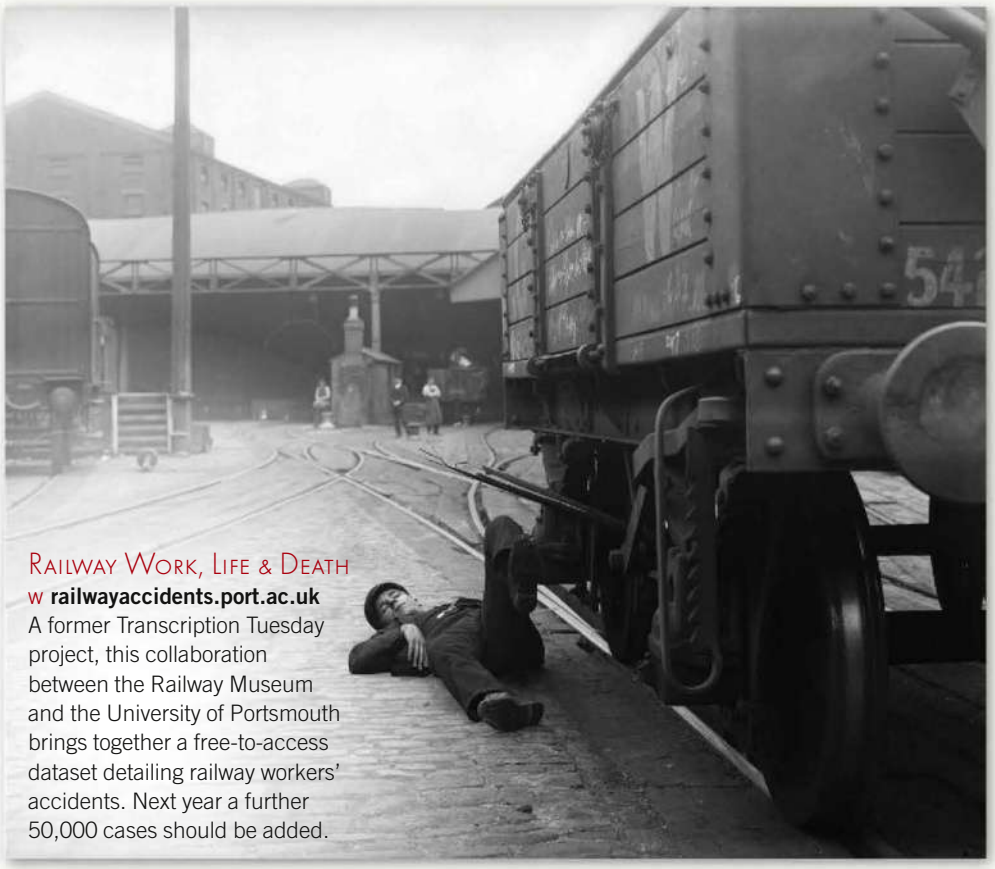
w **postalmuseum.org**

Addressing Health, a major research project with King's College London, examined the health of UK postal workers from the 19th and early 20th centuries. A recent addition is the digitised pension records that have been released on **data.addressinghealth.org.uk**, through which users can track pensions between c1860 and c1908. You should also keep your eyes peeled for the pension and establishment books that are due to go live on Ancestry (see page 16).

Public Record Office Of Northern Ireland

w **nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/public-record-office-northern-ireland-proni**

Next year PRONI will be expanding its Map Viewer, adding 50 charts that were not included in the original release. Staff will also update guides to textile records and slavery, and continue to work with the Virtual Record Treasury of Ireland (see page 21), adding more surrogates of records lost in the fire at the Public Record Office of Ireland in 1922, such as documents relating to the Chief Secretary for Ireland and religious census material. For more on Northern Ireland, see page 61.



Railway Work, Life & Death

w **railwayaccidents.port.ac.uk**

A former Transcription Tuesday project, this collaboration between the Railway Museum and the University of Portsmouth brings together a free-to-access dataset detailing railway workers' accidents. Next year a further 50,000 cases should be added.

Royal National Lifeboat Association

w **rnli.org.uk**

Not only is the RNLI celebrating 200 years of lifesaving heroism in 2024, but the first fruits of its partnership with Ancestry are set to see the light of day. The material includes records of lifeboat crews across the UK and Ireland, summary service records, gallantry medals, and records of those who funded lifeboats. Its website will be improved too, making it easier to delve into the charity's history.

Society Of Genealogists

w **sog.org.uk**

The SOG is launching a new archive collections catalogue, enhancing its digital collections platform, and developing a combined search option across its library, archive catalogues and digital collections.

GETTY IMAGES

Scotland

John Gray Centre

w **www.johngraycentre.org/transatlantic-slave-trade/**

The centre will be expanding on this recently launched series covering East Lothian's connections to the slave trade.

Royal College Of Physicians Of Edinburgh

w **rcpe.ac.uk**

The college is in the middle of a Wellcome Trust-funded project to digitise 99 volumes of 17th- and 18th-century patient records from one of the first public dispensaries in Scotland.

ScotlandsPeople

w **scotlandspeople.gov.uk**

The annual register releases of birth entries from 1923, marriages from 1948 and deaths in 1973 will take place at the beginning of 2024. More prison registers are due to be added too, as well as another year's worth of records to the new Women's Land Army material.

Scottish Indexes

w **scottishindexes.com**

The website's Scotland's Criminal Database now has over half a million records from 38 Scottish prisons thanks to the recent addition of 180,000 prison register entries. Look out too for the second phase of its Court of Session records project.

GETTY IMAGES

TheGenealogist

w **thegenealogist.co.uk**

TheGenealogist will be adding issues of *The Graphic*, *The Times* and *Punch* to its 'Newspaper and Magazine' collections. Staff are also working on indexing new pensions and awards documents to be launched in 2024, together with new Irish records, Royal Navy records and more probate material. You can also expect additions to the website's Lloyd George Domesday collection, while more census images will be upgraded to higher-resolution greyscale.

The London Museum

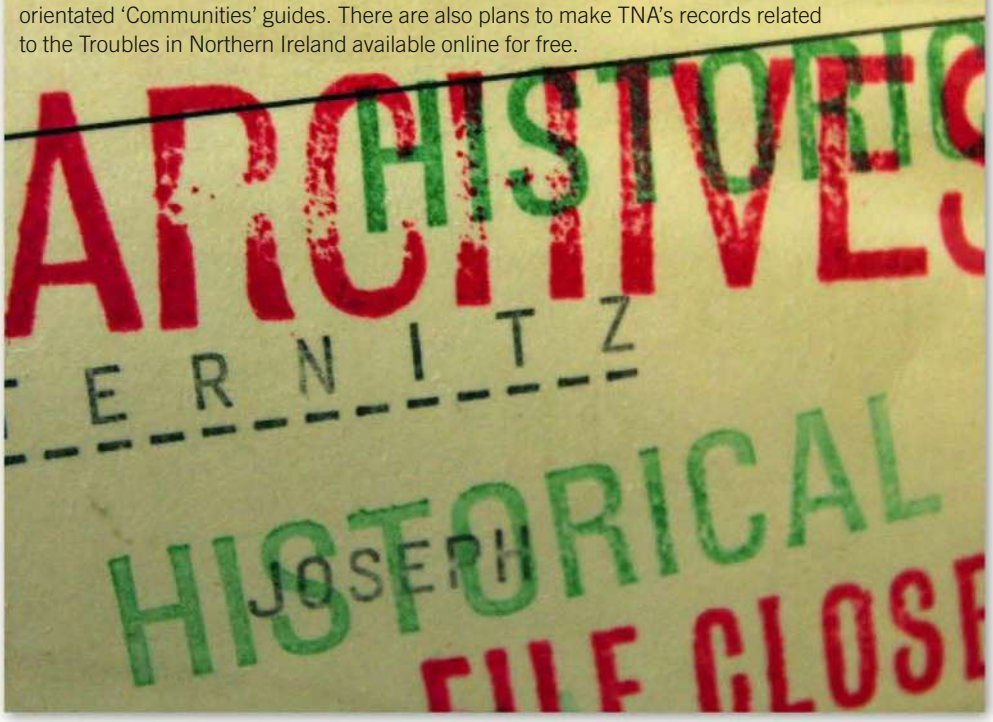
w **museum.london**

The former Museum of London is moving to Smithfield. A 'reimagined' website is on the horizon too, plus 5,000 first-hand audio stories will be made available online.

The National Archives

w **nationalarchives.gov.uk**

A new website is being developed, while the editorial team are working on new guides for those with African, South Asian, North American, Australasian or Irish ancestors, as well as social-history orientated 'Communities' guides. There are also plans to make TNA's records related to the Troubles in Northern Ireland available online for free.



The Wiener Holocaust Library

w **wienerholocaustlibrary.org**

A new Digital Library will launch in the summer with eyewitness reports from concentration camps, evidence of political antisemitism and fascism across Europe, newspapers, diaries and reports by survivors and displaced peoples, as well as correspondence from such famous figures as Albert Einstein.

Virtual Treasury Of Ireland

w **virtualtreasury.ie**

A 'Genealogy Resources' page should be added by the end of 2023, where all of the most valuable genealogical records will congregate – making life much easier if you have Irish roots.

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‘My Ancestors Were MPs With Royal Connections’

CELEBRATING YOUR DISCOVERIES

With a DNA test as her starting point, Lynsey Ford followed a trail that led from humble ‘ag labs’ back to the movers and shakers of the 15th and 16th centuries, she tells **Claire Vaughan**

As she posted off her DNA test, Lynsey Ford had no idea of the amazing family secrets it would help her unlock. She would go on to discover ancestors who were members of Parliament, bishops and authors, and who had links to royalty: James I, Elizabeth I – and even Princess Diana.

Lynsey, a postgraduate student at Oxford University with a PhD on the horizon living in Wimbledon, South-West London, is no stranger to research. It’s perhaps no surprise then that she would be gripped by the family history bug. “My grandfather used to tell my mother that he knew he was related to a squire, but his knowledge was a bit patchy.” He also had a deep loathing for MPs, which is ironic.

Dec.r 15 | William Arthur | Cope | Great | Laborer | John Ward
No. 699. | Son of Eliza | | Bedwyn | | Vicar
Born 15 Nov.r 1839

The marriage banns of Lynsey’s great great grandfather William Cope

Lynsey’s great grandparents Albert and Rose Cope

“I did my first family tree when I was eight years old,” she says. “It went back to my great grandparents on both sides. It was a very basic, sketchy tree.”

During the Covid-19 lockdowns, she decided to get to grips with her family history more seriously, and took an AncestryDNA test (**ancestry.co.uk/dna**). When the results eventually came though, she used the firm’s online tools to help pick her way back through them to fill in the gaps on her tree.

One particular branch grabbed Lynsey’s attention. “I knew about the Copes back to my great grandfather, Albert Cope (1872–1960), and his wife, Rose Burnham (1878–1938).

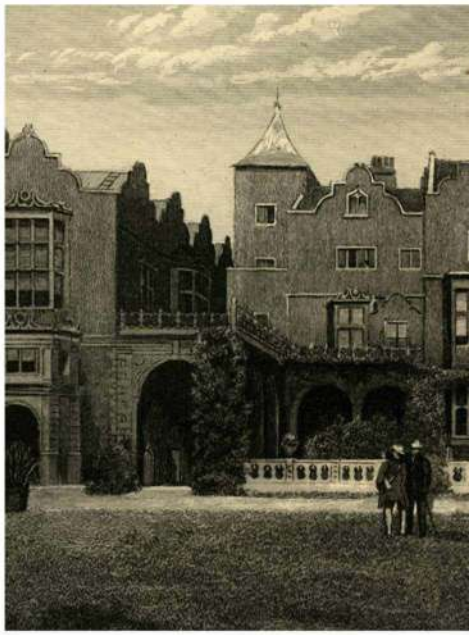
“I recently managed to pinpoint the earliest DNA matches on that line, which were Robert Cope (1743–1770) and Elizabeth Tarrant (1746–1814), who are my 5x great grandparents.” The AncestryDNA test reveals family relationships reliably back 200 years. Beyond that, Lynsey resorted to documentary evidence to continue her quest.

Robert and Elizabeth lived in Great Bedwyn, Wiltshire. As far as Lynsey could tell, Robert and his father Robert (1712–1770) and grandfather Thomas (1691–1757) had all worked the land. The will of Thomas’ father Richard Cope (1658–1728), which she tracked down on Ancestry, revealed that he had been a yeoman and owned a property called Braill Farm.

Following The Paper Trail

Lynsey pursued every lead possible to find out about the Copes – parish registers, wills and Ancestry member trees. She was astounded to discover a verifiable link to Sir Anthony Cope (1548–1614), 1st Baronet of Hanwell, Oxfordshire, who had been an MP. He was Richard Cope’s great grandfather, and Lynsey’s 11x great grandfather. Her investigations took her to the History of Parliament website, a comprehensive guide to the institution and its members: **historyofparliamentonline.org**. Here she eagerly read Sir Anthony’s biography, and realised that she had tapped into a fascinating and richly documented vein of aristocratic family history.

A Puritan, Sir Anthony served as the MP for Banbury and Oxfordshire, and was a politician in the House of Commons for



Arthur, Lynsey's grandfather, is on the far left of the front row in this photograph from the wedding of Lynsey's great aunt Rose Cope to George Simmonds

over 40 years. "A collector of aid for Prince Henry in 1609 and for Princess Elizabeth in 1613, he served as the constable of Banbury Castle. He was imprisoned in the Tower of London in 1587 for presenting a Puritan version of the Book of Common Prayer to the speaker of the House of Commons."

"Knighted by Elizabeth I, Sir Anthony served as the sheriff of Oxfordshire in 1582–1583, 1591–1592 and 1603–1604. In 1610, he spoke in favour of legislation against swearing, but his main preoccupation was that religion should be at the top of the political agenda." In June 1611, James I made him a baronet.

The Copes, it turned out, had been a dynamic, political dynasty. Sir Anthony's younger brother, Sir Walter Cope, bought Earl's Court in 1610, and became the joint keeper of Hyde Park in 1612. "He was a gentleman usher of the Privy Chamber by 1607 and served for the constituencies of St Mawes, 1589; Weymouth, 1601; Westminster, 1604; and Stockbridge, 1614."

Sir Anthony's grandfather, also Sir Anthony (c1486–1551), made his name as an author and politician, and the vice-principal and principal chamberlain to Henry VIII's sixth and final wife Catherine Parr. "Anthony's royal duties involved managing a household of 38 members of staff, paying goldsmiths, embroiders and mercers. He was knighted in 1547, and became the sheriff of Oxfordshire and Berkshire.

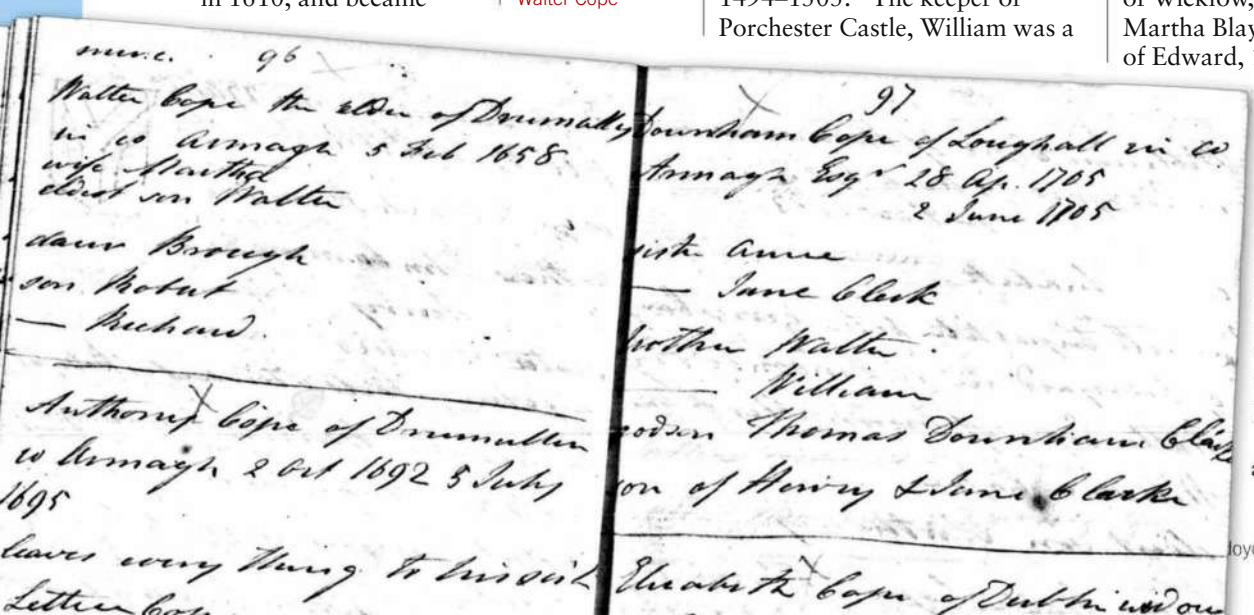
Sir Anthony senior's father, Sir William Cope (1440–1513), Lynsey's 14x great grandfather, was cofferer to Henry VII in 1494–1505. "The keeper of Porchester Castle, William was a member of the Privy Council. His role as cofferer involved paying the wages of servants in the Royal Household, where he also worked as the treasurer." Sir William sold land at Wormleighton and Fenny Compton to the Spencers of Althorp, the forebears of Sir Winston Churchill and Princess Diana. "Diana's ancestors may be part of my family as well through Sir William Cope's wife, Jane Spencer (1462–1526), daughter of John Spencer of Hodnell."

Power Couples

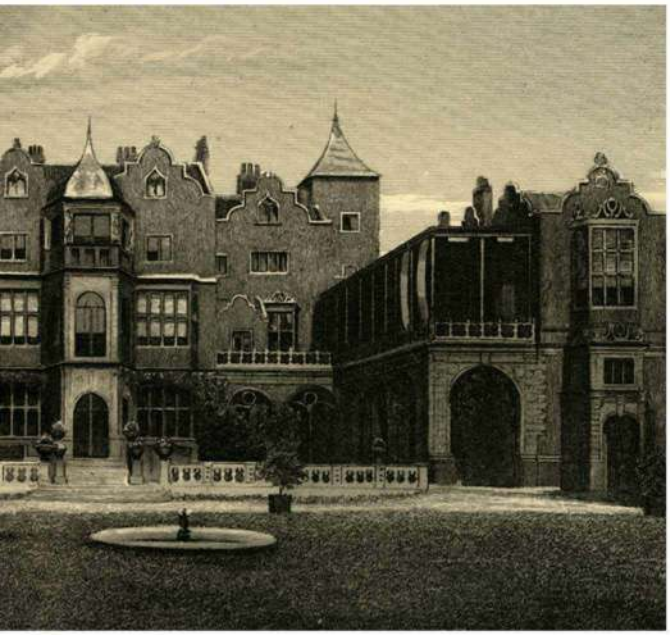
Indeed, as if discovering several generations of Cope men who moved in Parliamentary and royal circles wasn't enough, Lynsey learnt that their wives also came from powerful families.

"My 9x great grandfather Walter Cope (1605–1658), of Wicklow, Ireland, married Martha Blayney, the daughter of Edward, 1st Baron Blayney (1570–1629), and Anne Loftus (c1567–1650), whose descendants include Field Marshal Arthur Wellesley, 1st Duke of Wellington. Baron Blayney was a soldier from Montgomeryshire who became a politician in Ireland."

He was knighted at Dublin Castle



The will of Lynsey's 9x great grandfather Walter Cope



Holland House in London, designed by Inigo Jones, was built for Sir Walter Cope in 1605

in 1603, and served as MP for County Monaghan (1613–1615). His wife's father was Adam Loftus (c1533–1605), Archbishop of Dublin and the first provost of Trinity College Dublin. "Originally from the Yorkshire Dales, Loftus became a favourite of Elizabeth I. A graduate from Trinity College, Cambridge, he took on many high-profile roles within the Church. Arriving in Ireland in 1560, Loftus became the Archbishop of Armagh in 1563 and lord chancellor of Ireland in 1581."

Clashing with anyone who challenged his authority within the Protestant church, "he was instrumental in the arrest, torture and execution of the Catholic Archbishop of Cashel, Dermot O'Hurley, who was suspected of high treason under Elizabeth I".

There are other reminders of Lynsey's forebears, including the effigies of Sir Anthony Cope junior and his wife Frances Lytton lying side by side in their tombs in St Mary's Parish Church, Hanwell. And then there are the grand houses that the Copes made their homes. The 3rd Duke of Suffolk gave Hanwell Manor to Sir William Cope in 1498. Hanwell Castle, the grand house Sir William built, became the family seat, remaining with the Cope baronets of Hanwell until 1721. James I visited several times, but the property fell into disrepair and only the south-west tower and south range remain today. Another of the family's great houses was Cope Castle, built 1605–1607. Now known as Holland House, it stands in Holland Park, Kensington.

Entertaining The Royals

The money and prestige gradually passed away from Lynsey's Cope line. Being a player in medieval England was costly. "Upon his death, Sir Anthony junior had accrued debts of £20,000, which came from his lavish spending as one who frequently entertained royals. Any sort of privileges have died out on our line because we were simply one of many."

Lynsey admits to being very shocked to discover her illustrious forebears. "I'm not going to lie, when I saw 'Anthony Cope, 1st Baronet of Hanwell' I thought 'Wow!' Since we came from very humble stock, to become a baronet is just amazing."

Since we came from very humble stock, to become a baronet is just amazing

So what does she make of these ancestors who left their mark on history? "The Copes seemed to be able to reinvent themselves, diversify, and were not afraid to hold back in Parliament. You had to be quite brainy to climb the ladder in medieval times too, and there was a dog-eat-dog mentality. To put all their life and soul into public service, I was quite proud of that."

Lynsey's Cope ancestors settled in Great Bedwyn in the early 18th century, where they stayed for seven generations. "My great grandfather, Albert Cope (1872–1960), was raised in Great Bedwyn but moved to Middlesex, where he worked as an antiques dealer. He met my great grandmother, Rose Burnham (1878–1938), when they were both in service for a major in Feltham. Rose was the cook, while Albert was coachman."

Lynsey's story is a reminder that – with the right records and a bit of luck – any of us might come upon a gateway ancestor who can open the door on a world of wealth and privilege. One thing she is keen to highlight though: "People should really invest in a DNA test. It may be expensive, but if you feel passionately about uncovering your ancestors, it's the best investment."

Resources

Lynsey researched her tree with the help of these resources

ANCESTRYDNA

w **ancestry.co.uk/dna**

Ancestry's autosomal DNA test can be taken by both men and women. Lynsey interpreted the results of her test to take her tree back five generations.

HISTORY OF PARLIAMENT

w **historyofparliamentonline.org**

Whether you're looking for biographies of members or extensive information about particular constituencies, you'll be able to find it here.

WILTSHIRE AND SWINDON HISTORY CENTRE

a **Cocklebury Road, Chippenham, Wiltshire SN15 3QN**
t 01249 705500
e *heritageadmin@wiltshire.gov.uk*
w **wshc.org.uk**

The centre holds the Salisbury Diocesan Probate collection: 105,000 wills and inventories dating from the mid-16th century to the Victorian period. The records cover Wiltshire and Berkshire, parts of Dorset and Devon, and can be accessed in Ancestry's collection 'Wiltshire, England, Wills and Probate, 1530–1858' (**ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/61333**).

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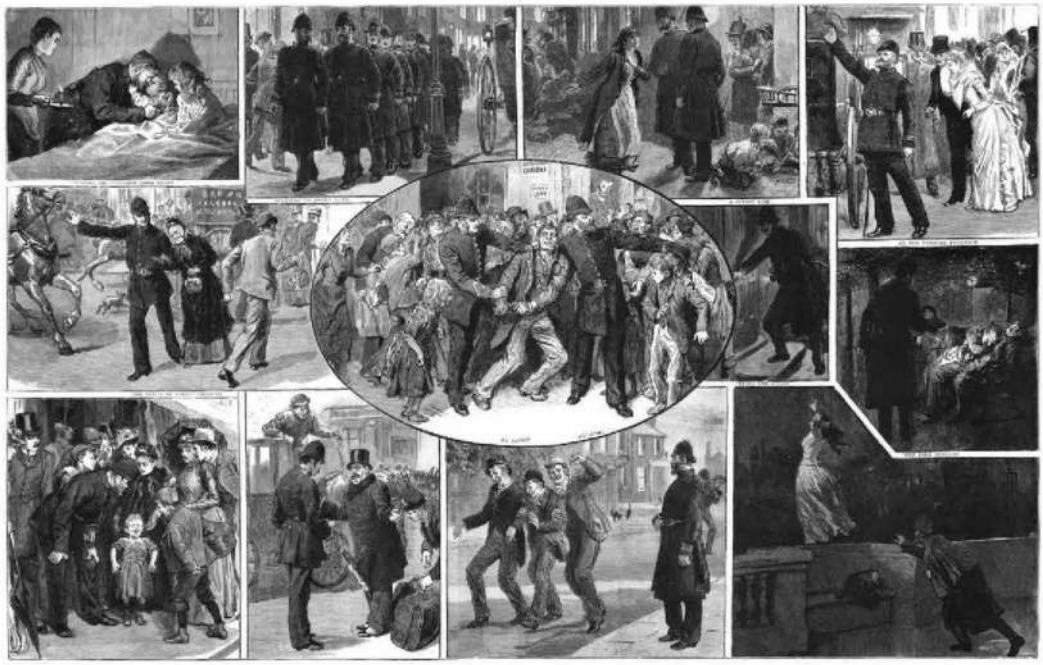
These Metropolitan Police officers were photographed c1930

GETTY IMAGES

The Metropolitan Police

Edward Smith of the Metropolitan Police Service shares his advice for researching ancestors in the Met



These "Scenes from the Life of a London Policeman" were published in the newspaper *The Graphic* in 1890

Formed in 1829, the Metropolitan Police took over from the medieval system of parish constables. Taking in areas within 15 miles of Charing Cross, it also subsumed the 18th-century Bow Street Runners and River Police in 1839 – the latter became Thames Division, some of whose pension registers can be accessed if you visit the Thames River Police Museum in Wapping (**thamespolicemuseum.org.uk/museum**). Between 1860 and 1934 Met officers could also be found in the Royal Arsenal, Woolwich, and at the naval dockyards in Chatham, Devonport, Pembroke and Portsmouth, while Rosyth on the Firth of Forth was added in 1916.

Regular officers were supplemented by Special Constables, and by War Reserve Constables in the Second World War. The Met's architects, clerks and other administrators were known as police staff or the Civil Staff, while the organisation also employed police matrons and, from February 1919, female officers. The City of London retained its own independent force, while many other separate smaller forces continued to operate, such as those of companies running the railway network and commercial docks.

Since the Met was solely under Home Office control until 2000, the vast majority of its central personnel records are now with The National Archives at Kew (TNA; **nationalarchives.gov.uk**). Those most useful sources for the genealogical study of male officers are concentrated into the record set 'Metropolitan Police: Office of the Commissioner: Miscellaneous Books and Papers' (MEPO 4), which includes registers of joiners from 1829–1857 (4/31, 4/32, 4/333 and 4/334) and 1878–1933 (4/335 to 4/338), leavers from 1889–1947 (4/339 to 4/351), and pensions for leavers between 1839 and 1859 (4/33).

At the start of his service a Constable would take an attestation oath and sign a register – those from 1869–1958 are in MEPO 4/352 to 360, while those from 1958–2003 are still with the Metropolitan Police Museum in Sidcup (**met.police.uk/museums**), with images available by email on request.

Free Online Access

All of the MEPO 4 records mentioned here can be downloaded as PDFs for free via TNA's online catalogue Discovery provided you're logged into your user account (**discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk**). Some of the records ▶

John Michael Mulvany 1850–1916

The life of a Victorian police officer, as revealed in the records

Born in St John's Wood in the City of Westminster, John Michael Mulvany lived with his parents until at least the night of the 1871 census, following his father John senior into the Met on 29 May that year as part of P (Camberwell) Division. As reflected in his pension register entry and other sources, he served over 40 years but remained in uniform, unlike his father who rose to the rank of Detective Inspector.

In 1872 Mulvany married Eliza Pitt, a gardener's daughter, at the Church of St Mary-at-Lambeth. However, she died less than two months later. His two subsequent marriages also occurred in Lambeth district.

A promotion to Sub-Divisional Inspector – the officer in charge of a group of beats – took Mulvany, his second wife Caroline Percival and their children to Sunbury in T (Hammersmith) Division in 1875, returning to P (Camberwell) in June 1881. Here he became famous for arresting Thomas Neill Cream, better known as the Lambeth Poisoner.

His final promotion was to head H (Whitechapel) Division in 1895, living less than 200 yards from Arbour Square Police Station in Stepney. Months before his retirement in September 1911 he led his division during the six-hour Siege of Sidney Street, a gun battle in which the police and marksmen from the Scots Guards exchanged fire with a pair of Latvian revolutionaries.

Mulvany was living in Ilford when he died, although he passed away at the London Hospital in Whitechapel, and was buried at St Patrick's Roman Catholic Cemetery, Leytonstone.

TOP TIP!

Ancestry's images of the pension registers sometimes omit the final digits of the birth and discharge years. It may help to search for a birthplace with no birth year.

GETTY IMAGES/METROPOLITAN POLICE MUSEUM

Physical Examination Certificate, 1932

This record of George Edward Buck's service is held by The National Archives at Kew (MEPO 4/473/96689) and available digitally via its online catalogue (**discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk**)

89

METROPOLITAN POLICE CONSTABLE.

Name George Edward Buck.
Date of Appointment 15th day of March 1909.
Number of Warrant **1** 96689

No. of former Warrant if a reappointment
No. of subsequent Warrant if reappointed

2 To what Division attached—the Exchanges and Dates.

Division.	Day.	Month.	Year.	Division.	Day.	Month.	Year.	Division.	Day.	Month.	Year.
f	15	3	09	Y	29	8	14	[illegible]	—	—	—
Y	13	6	23	[illegible]	20	8	24	Y	8	9	'24
[illegible]	2nd	July	26	Y	1	8	[illegible]				
[illegible]	10	[illegible]	27	Y	[illegible]	8	22				

3 Promotion and Reduction in Rank.

Promoted to Sergeant
" Station Sergeant
" Inspector
" Divisional Inspector
" Sub-Divisional Inspector
" Chief Inspector
" Superintendent

Date of Suspension and Re-instatement

Date of Removal from the Force Recd. P.O. 16 SEP 1932

4 REMARKS.

Taken off pay for service with Army P.O. 2.2.15
C.77167. Reported awarded Military Medal.
Taken on pay Vide P.O. 25.7.19
Unfit. C.R. 120/PB/2610

No. in Examined Candidates' Book 7047

(4)

EXAMINATION

Of a CANDIDATE for the Situation of a Police Constable.

QUESTIONS. ANSWERS.

Name **5** George Edward Buck
Age 24 years; born 21 day of 9 1884
Height **6** 5 feet 11 3/4 inches.
Weight 11 stones 12 lbs.
Chest measurement 36-8 inches.
Complexion Fresh.
Eyes Brown
Hair Brown
Particular Marks Scald right thigh. Tattoo left forearm. [illegible]
Where Born: In the Parish Belton. In or near the Town of Gorleston. In the County of Suffolk
Trade or Calling Army.
Single or Married Single
Number of Children None
Residence **7** Station Rd. Belton
What Public Services Army.
Police, Regiment, Corps, &c. **8** R.F.A.
Length of Service 8 yrs.
When discharged Still serving Awaiting Dis.
With whom last employed Army.
And where [illegible]
If ever in the Metropolitan Police Service no
Whether belonging to any illegal Secret Society no

Date 1:12:1908

Examining Clerk.

9 SURGEON'S CERTIFICATE.

I HEREBY CERTIFY that I have examined the above Candidate, as to his health and bodily strength, and that I consider him fit for Police Duty.

Surgeon in Chief.

1 Warrant Number

As well as the current warrant number, this section would record any other warrant numbers held during previous or future service with the Met. Numbers were not reused if an officer left the service.

2 Division

Each division had a letter, as did Thames division (TA) and New Scotland Yard (CO), although dockyard divisions were numbered instead.

3 Promotion

A Superintendent and Divisional Inspector led a division, but most stations were headed by a Sub-Divisional Inspector and a Station Sergeant.

4 Remarks

These can often be cross-referenced with a date in a police order (PO) or the records of a man's First World War service.

5 Name

The inclusion of the officer's full name and birthdate can help you identify your ancestor in the records.

6 Physical Description

The form records fascinating details about the officer, including their height, weight, the colour of their hair and eyes, and any distinguishing marks.

7 Residence

The officer's address upon joining is also recorded in the certificate.

8 Public Service

A man was sometimes physically examined while still in the Army, Navy or another British or colonial police force.

9 Surgeon's Certificate

In an era before the creation of the NHS, the Met was keen to ensure that candidates were fit enough to serve.

This photograph of officers in the Metropolitan Police posing outside their station was taken c1890

▶ can also be searched by officer's name, although beware of mistranscriptions, and middle names may have been omitted. Early registers in particular are often sorted by first letter then subsequent vowel (M…a, M…e and so on), rather than by standard alphabetisation.

Early joiners' registers often include the names and addresses of referees supplying written references in support of the new constable's application, while physical examination certificates for 1889–1909 (MEPO 4/361 to 477) hold tantalising details such as last job and employer, a physical description, and date of death if he was killed fighting in the First World War. One page of the certificate was always filled in during a physical examination prior to formally joining the Met, even if he had joined before, then the other page was updated until his service ended.

If you can't find your relation in these records, this may simply mean that he died while still serving or left the force before completing the 25 years required for a full pension. A male officer might also have joined in the period for which joiners' registers are lost (1858–1877), or left before the surviving leavers' registers began in 1889. If your police ancestor resided in the City of London, they were probably instead in the City of London Police, whose historical personnel records are held by the London Metropolitan Archives as record set CLA/048 (**tinyurl.com/lma-city-london-police**).

Early joiners' registers often include the names and addresses of referees

In addition, Ancestry has the collection 'London, England, Metropolitan Police Pension Registers, 1852–1932' based on the records in MEPO 21: **ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/61310**.

Other avenues are available for researching Metropolitan Police officers, too. These include dating their service by identifying their medals or medal ribbons shown in photos. For officers from the 1880s to the 1920s these often included the Police Jubilee Medals, issued for Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee in 1887 and Diamond Jubilee in 1897, and the Police Coronation Medals of 1902 (for Edward VII) and 1911 (George V), along with the King's Police Medal awarded from 1909 onwards for gallantry or distinguished service, and the

Expert Picks

Edward recommends these online sources if your relation served in the Met

Ancestry

w **ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/61310**

Here you'll find pension registers from MEPO 21 at The National Archives in Kew. These include an officer's birthdate and birthplace, parents' names, next of kin and address.

Discovery

w **discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk**

TNA also holds Metropolitan Police records in series MEPO 4. Its online catalogue can help you locate your forebear in the records, and download them for free if you're logged in.

Old Bailey Online

w **oldbaileyonline.org**

You can search transcriptions from 197,745 trials at London's central criminal court via this site. If an officer gave evidence he would often be mentioned by rank and surname.

GETTY IMAGES

Defence Medal for service on the beat in the Second World War.

We also have a range of sources at the Metropolitan Police Museum. We cannot undertake research on your behalf, but we offer weekly appointments to view our records, which include some centrally generated registers such as those for widows' pensions from 1880–1969, for gratuities granted to those resigning on medical grounds from 1859–1931, and for medical re-examinations for pensions from 1891–1933.

DID YOU KNOW?

From 1839 the Met served from Staines to Erith and from Cheshunt to Epsom – areas outside London's 1965 boundary only transferred to their counties' forces in 2000.

Free Service Records

We also hold a large number of Central Records of Service and Divisional Records of Service for male and female officers who joined between the 1930s and the 1980s. These cannot be accessed by visitors in person, but PDFs can be provided by email to the officer featured in a record (upon receipt of photographic ID), or to their relation upon receipt of a copy of the death certificate.

It should also be noted that for much of its history the Met was divided into geographical divisions such as R (Greenwich) and A (Whitehall), then into subdivisions and finally into beats. The museum also holds ledgers for a number of these divisions. These only show male officers, listing them by their divisional or collar number, which would only be held by one officer at a time in a division. Before 1935 that number could also be seen on an officer's helmet, with three digits for constables and one or two digits for sergeants. The dates covered vary, but the ledgers provide an officer's warrant number (retained even when he moved division); height; birthplace; fate, such as promoted, resigned or moved to another division; and how much previous service he had in the armed forces or another police force.

Divisional numbers can also be checked in Police Orders. Issued daily, these can give details of the start and end of a career along with any commendations, punishments or reasons for dismissal. However, these are not yet digitised. The museum holds a set from 1858–1968, while TNA's set MEPO 7 includes the same date range plus handwritten precursors from 1829–1858.

The museum also holds Women's Attestation Registers from 1923–1992 along with service records for several early female officers; some Police Orders specific to the Metropolitan Special Constabulary; and a card index of members of the Metropolitan Special Constabulary and the War Reserve Constabulary.

GETTY IMAGES

Officers in the Met receive training on coping with gas attacks, 13 March 1937

EDWARD SMITH has been the Metropolitan Police Service's curatorial assistant since 2018

Resources

Take your research further

BOOK

Behind the Blue Lamp
Alan Moss, David Swinden and Peter Kennison
Mango Books, 2021
This A-to-Z of Metropolitan Police stations and their histories includes images from the Police Museum.

The Official Encyclopaedia of Scotland Yard
Martin Fido and Keith Skinner
Virgin Publishing, 1999
This reference book covers a basic history of the Met and includes appendices on uniforms, medals and deaths in the line of duty.

MUSEUMS

METROPOLITAN POLICE MUSEUM
a **Marlowe House, 109 Station Road, Sidcup DA15 7ES**
e *policemuseum@met.police.uk*
w **www.met.police.uk/museums**
Appointments for the research room (Wednesdays) and tours of the gallery (Thursdays) need to be booked at least a week in advance by email.

BOW STREET POLICE MUSEUM
a **28 Bow Street, London WC2E 7AW**
e *nfo@bowstreetpolicemuseum.org.uk*
w **bowstreetpolicemuseum.org.uk**
The museum traces policing from the Runners onwards.

WEBSITE

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVE
w **tinyurl.com/tna-guide-met**
TNA's online research guide to the records it holds from the Met is indispensable.

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Family History Tutorials
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Discover our round-up of new deals and discounts for family historians – helping you save money

Real Stories
Read extraordinary real-life stories that our readers have uncovered while researching their trees

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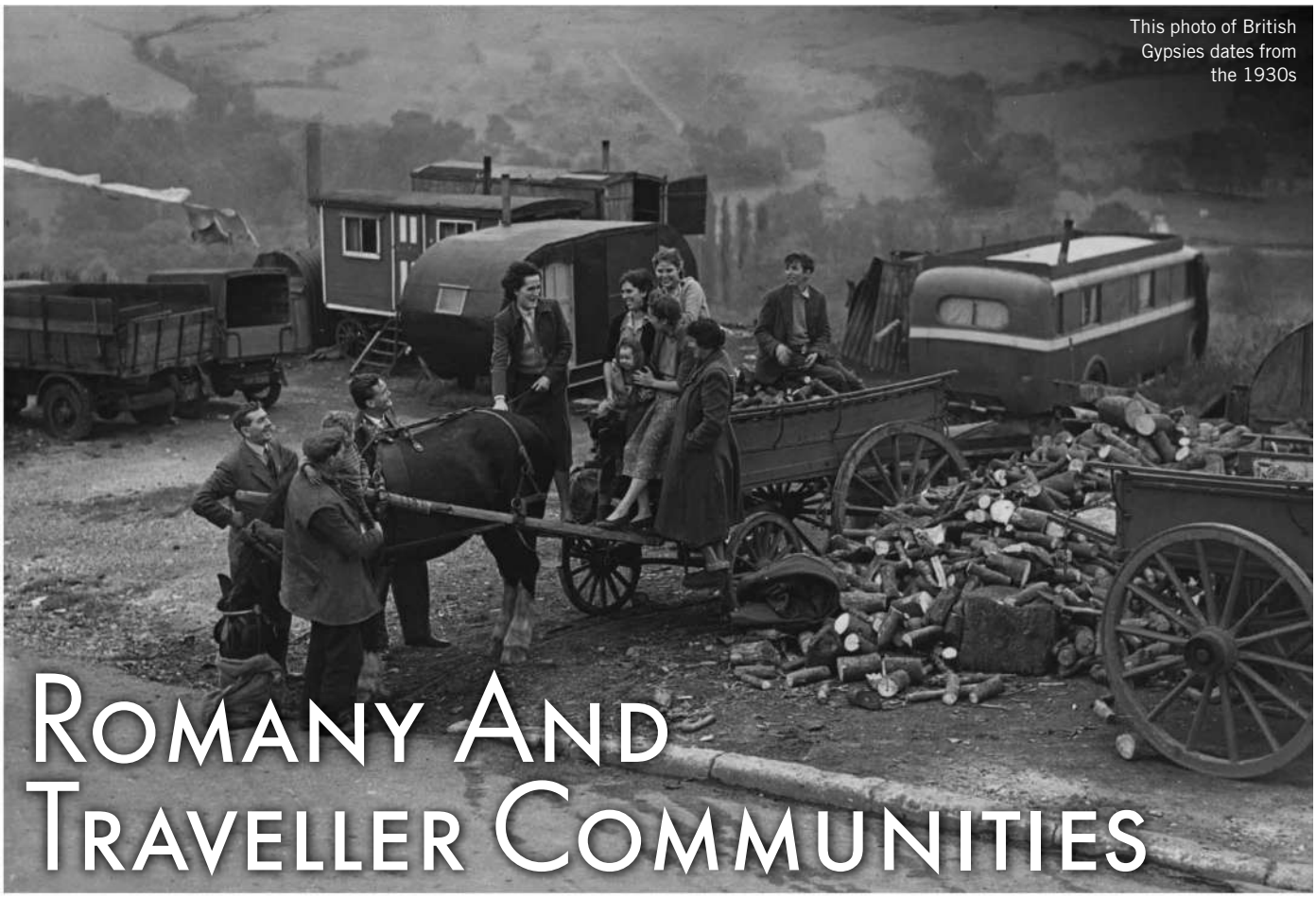


This photo of British Gypsies dates from the 1930s

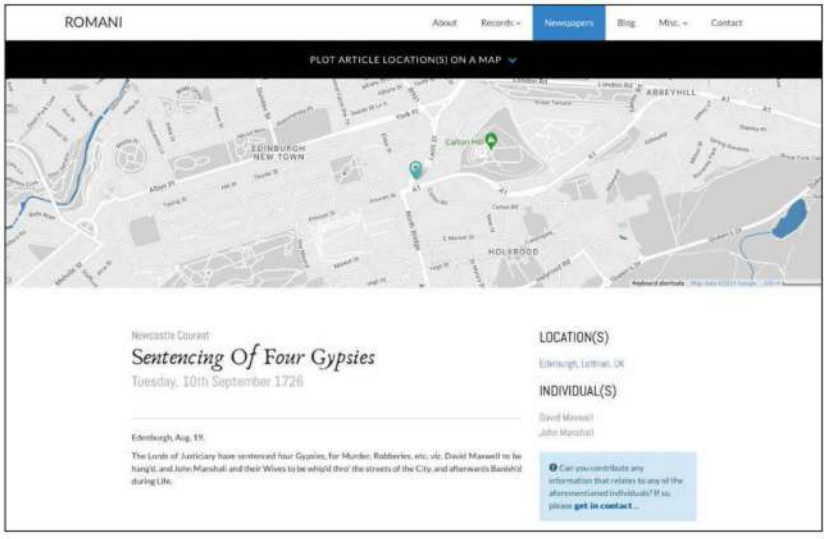
Romany And Traveller Communities

Jonathan Scott tracks down useful websites for ancestors who were Travellers

The website of the Romany and Traveller Family History Society (**rtfhs.org.uk**), our expert's choice this month, has all sorts of excellent advice if you have transient kin. It's a complicated subject, and the key to searching within many sources, indexes and databases is the clever use of keywords. Words such as circus, fair, caravan, van, tent, camp and encampment can all help when using historic newspapers. There are numerous words that might describe specific Roma communities too. Irish Gypsies or Travellers, a distinct ethnic group, are often referred to in parish registers as "Pavees" or "Mincéirs". Other terms are itinerants, rogues, vagabonds and vagrants, plus, of course, Traveller and Gypsy (also spelled Gipsey or Gipsy).

As for occupations, some members of Traveller communities would be recorded simply as "agricultural labourers" in the census. However, more common occupations include horse dealer, basket maker, brush maker, knife grinder, pot seller, marine dealer, pedlar (or pedler), blacksmith, tinman, chimney sweep, showman and hawker.

GETTY IMAGES



ROMANI

w **romaheritage.co.uk**

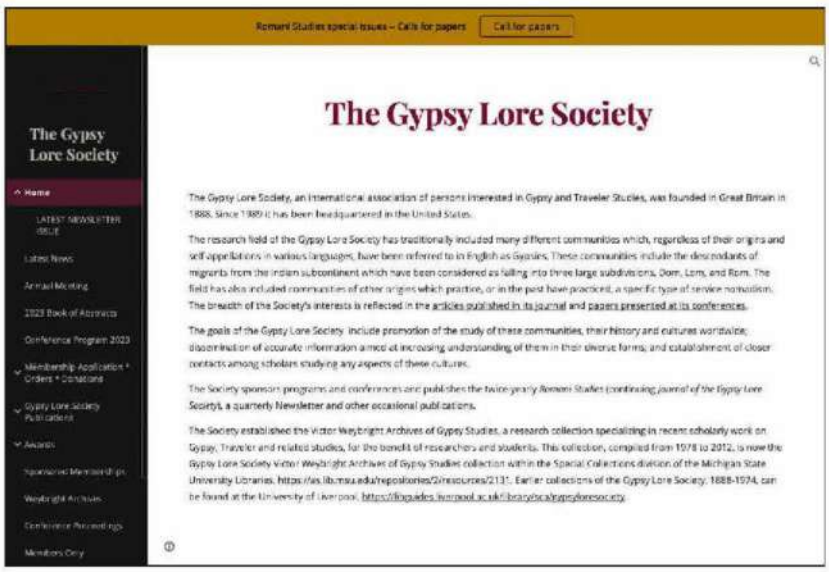
This excellent website started as one individual's attempt to map out his Romany family tree, but very quickly "grew out of hand" and turned into a heritage project dedicated to finding, tracking and recording any mention of Romany Gypsy families and individuals between 1500 and 1900, in any sources. One fun way to explore the material is by clicking 'Newspapers' in the menu bar, then 'Plot All Articles on a Map'. From there you can drill down to stories from locations across the UK. Clicking randomly we came across a reference in Wembdon, Somerset, where, in 1869, one Thomas Stanley was fined 10s for allowing two horses to stray on the highway. The coverage may seem random, but it's fun to explore, and should inspire your research.

BEST WEBSITES

SURREY HISTORY CENTRE

w **tinyurl.com/surrey-heritage-sources-gyp**

You can use the Surrey History Centre's online catalogue to find all kinds of material – from references in quarter sessions to pedlars' certificates. The best starting point is this page, which details what the archive holds, and where you can find it. Another highlight is the Philip Bradley Fairground Collection. When he was 16 he began keeping a written and photographic record of every fair he visited, including their rides and vehicles. There's also a heritage project that aimed to encourage greater access to the heritage collections for local Gypsy and Traveller populations (**surreycc.gov.uk/culture-and-leisure/history-centre/researchers/guides/cultures/roads-to-your-past**).



GYPSY LORE SOCIETY

w **gypsyloresociety.org**

Although founded in Britain in 1888, the Gypsy Lore Society is now based in the USA. Similarly its collections are found either at Michigan State University or the University of Liverpool. However, the society's journal is available to view via the HathiTrust Digital Library (**catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000499763**) and the Internet Archive (**tinyurl.com/archive-org-gypsy-lore-soc**). You can also find out more about the material at the University of Liverpool via this Special Collections & Archives web page: **libguides.liverpool.ac.uk/library/sca/gypsyloresociety**. This includes a world-renowned series of photos of British Romany people dating back to the 19th century.

EXPERT'S CHOICE

Sharon Heppell edits the Romany and Traveller Family History Society's journal

A Gypsy encampment in Notting Hill, London, c1877

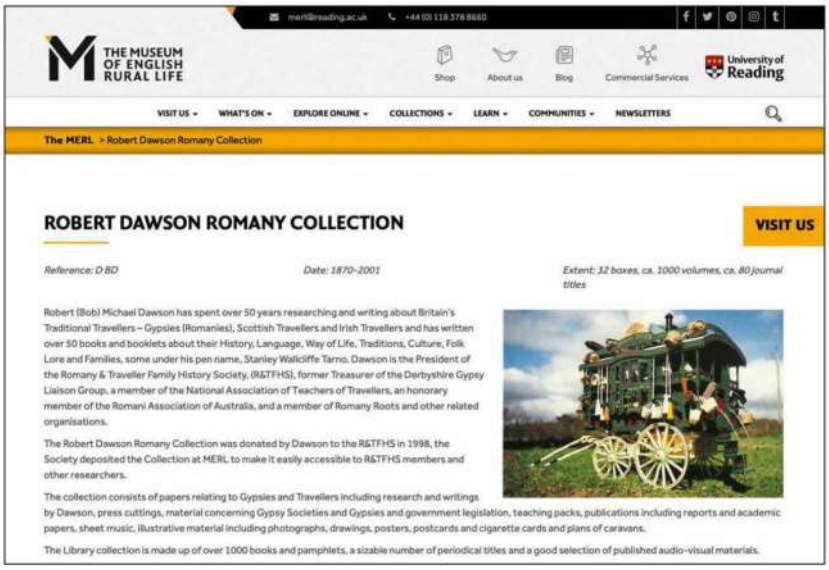
Readers might be interested in the free resources available on the Romany and Traveller Family History Society's site at **rtfhs.org.uk/free-records**. In particular there are links to transcriptions of baptisms/birth records, marriages and burials/deaths, and we add to these at least once a quarter.

Also, in the first few months of 2024 we are planning to make two new collections available on the site. The first is the Keith Chandler Romany Musicians Collection. This contains mini biographies of British Romanies who gave their occupations as musicians in historic documents, complete with details of their families and source references. We believe this will be of interest not only to those researching their Gypsy/Traveller trees but also to those researching the history of British folk music, morris dancing and social customs.

The second new collection for 2024 is the first phase of our Directory of Travelling Photographers, spanning 1850–1881. This will feature entries about British Romanies, Travellers and other itinerant people who followed careers as photographers, photographic assistants or retouchers working largely on the move with mobile darkrooms. Some Romany photographers with fixed studios will also be included. Again, this directory will be of interest both to family historians and to historians working in the fields of British photography and social customs.

And for anyone just starting out, make sure that you visit our site's 'About us' page (**rtfhs.org.uk/about-us**), as well as 'Was your ancestor a Gypsy?' (**rtfhs.org.uk/gypsy_identity**) and 'How to get started' (**rtfhs.org.uk/research_guide**).

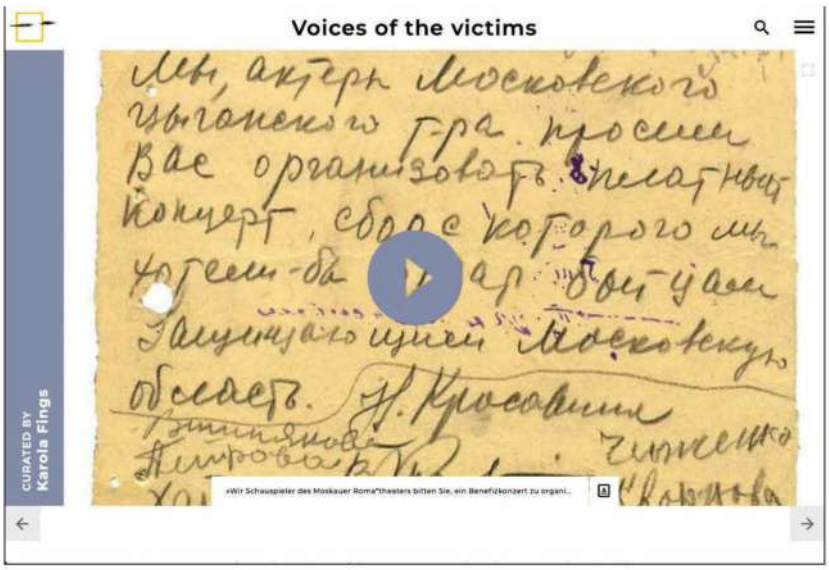
GETTY IMAGES



MUSEUM OF ENGLISH RURAL LIFE

w **merl.reading.ac.uk/collections/robert-dawson-romany-collection**

Based at the University of Reading, the museum is home to the largest single archive relating to the rural history of England. This includes the collection of renowned expert Robert Dawson, who gifted his research archive to the Romany and Traveller Family History Society, which then deposited it with the museum. Assembled over many years, it includes not only important publications, such as the journal of the Gypsy Lore Society, but also his own notebooks and manuscripts, recording family histories, research and observations, alongside images, ephemera and recordings. You can find out more about his work via **robertdawson.co.uk/geneology.html**.



ROMARCHIVE

w **romarchive.eu/en/voices-of-the-victims**

This digital archive fosters "the process of deconstruction and reconstruction of Romani history, arts, and cultures". It's a smart, inspiring website, covering politics, music, film, dance and the Roma civil-rights movement. The section linked to above collates material relating to communities persecuted by the Nazis as Kalderash, Lalleri, Lovari, Manouches, Roma, Sinti, or as members of any other Romani-speaking groups. You can explore letters and images that form evidence of persecution, from laws banning work or education; racist registration; marriage prohibition or forced divorce; forced sterilisation; forced labour; imprisonment; deportation; and murder.

Go Further

Eight more sites that you can't afford to miss

BRITISH HISTORY ONLINE

w **tinyurl.com/bho-vch-hull**

It's always worth checking the Victoria County History for your area of interest. The volume for Hull, for example, has summaries of fairs, markets and circuses of the late 18th century.

FAIRGROUND ASSOCIATION OF GREAT BRITAIN

w **fagb.co.uk**

The association's well-respected quarterly journal *The Fairground Mercury* includes useful articles about travelling showmen and women.

FOLKLORE SOCIETY

w **folklore-society.com**

This learned society traces its history back to 1878, and focuses on traditional music, song, dance and drama, folk medicine, food, arts and crafts, customs and belief.

HUNTINGDONSHIRE ARCHIVES

w **tinyurl.com/cambs-gov-huntingdonshire-arch**

The archive has a register of pedlars' certificates (1877–1967) on microfilm, granted annually to enable them to sell goods door-to-door.

NATIONAL FAIRGROUND AND CIRCUS ARCHIVE

w **sheffield.ac.uk/nfca**

This is another hub of information for anyone researching transient fairground communities, covering fairgrounds and circuses, sideshows, magic, boxing, variety and amusement parks.

PROJECT GUTENBERG

w **tinyurl.com/gutenberg-customs-gypsies**

This site has John Hoyland's *A Historical Survey of the Customs, Habits, and Present State of the Gypsies* (Wm Alexander, 1816), which includes references to Scarborough and Pocklington.

ROMA SUPPORT GROUP

w **romasupportgroup.org.uk**

The group offers various projects and resources.

WDYTYA? MAGAZINE

w **tinyurl.com/wdytya-magazine-gypsies**

Read our guide to researching Gypsy relations.

Trade unionist John Burns addresses a crowd during the 1889 London dock strike

TRADE UNION MEMBERS' REGISTERS

Paul Blake explains how to trace ancestors who joined workers' unions

Trade unionship began in the late 18th century with the start of the Industrial Revolution. By 1892, more than 1.5 million people were members in the UK. Just under 100,000 were women, mostly working in textile factories and mills.

Significant collections of trade union records can be found in the Working Class Movement Library in Salford (**wcml.org.uk**); these include print unions, gas workers, boilermakers and shipwrights. In addition, the Museum of English Rural Life at the University of Reading (**merl.reading.ac.uk**) holds records of agricultural trade unionism, while the Trades Union Congress Library Collections preserved by London Metropolitan University include a wide range of journals, pamphlets, periodicals and other material (**student.londonmet.ac.uk/library/using-the-library/special-collections/trades-union-congress-library-collections**).

Further important collections are held at the Labour History Archive and Study Centre at the People's History Museum in Manchester (**phm.org.uk/collections/labour-history-archive-study-centre**), and the University of Swansea which holds the South Wales Coalfield Collection (**lisweb.swan.ac.uk/swcc**).

Also, many local record offices and archives hold information for the smaller, local unions, while the National Library of Scotland's manuscript collections in Edinburgh include extensive records of Scottish trade unions (**www.nls.uk/catalogues/labour-history/trade-unions/**).

The Modern Records Centre has records from more than 250 unions

However, the most significant collection of archives from national trade unions is held by the Modern Records Centre (MRC) at Warwick University (**warwick.ac.uk/services/library/mrc**). The MRC has records from more than 250 unions, although not all include membership details.

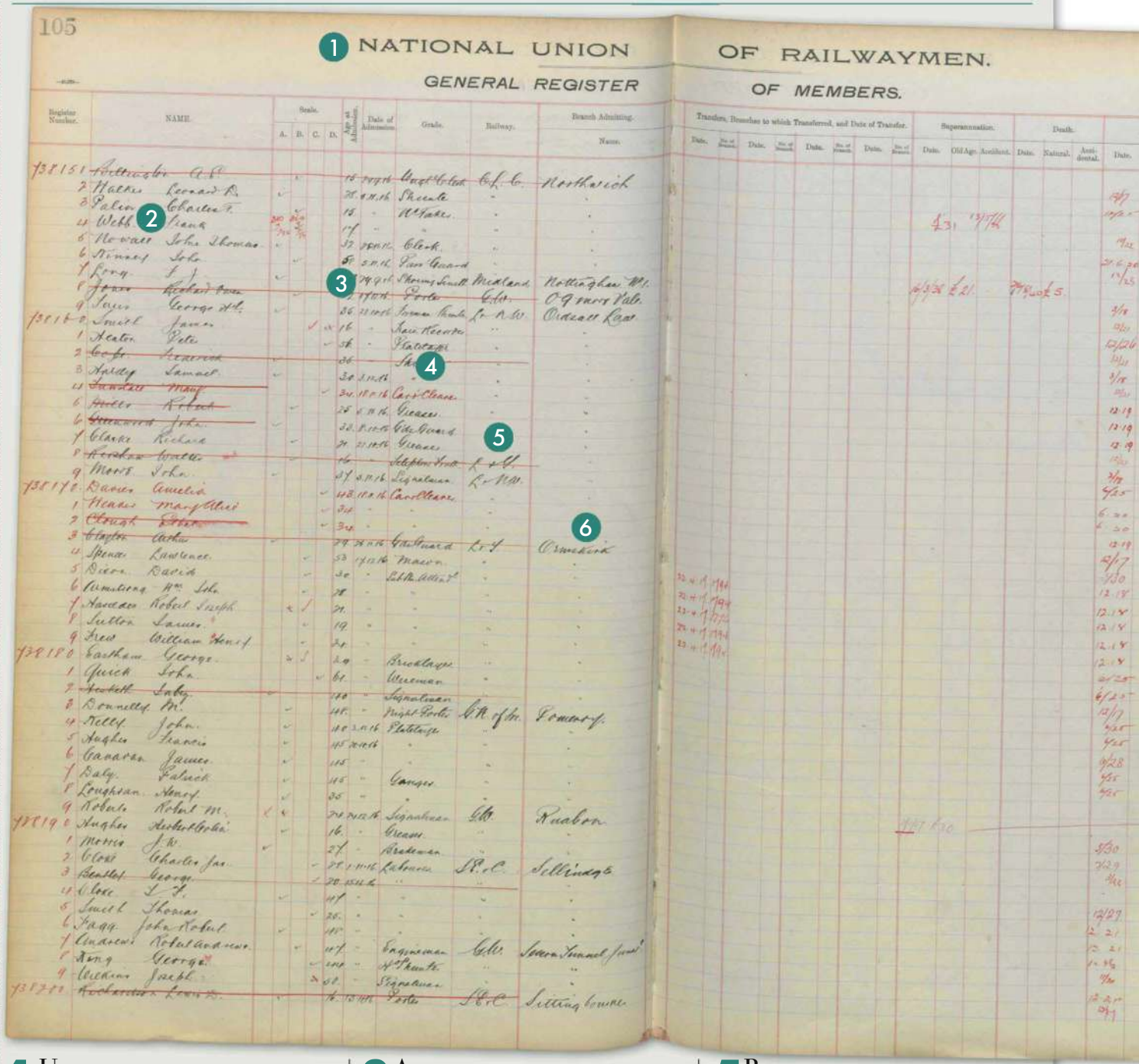
Findmypast's collection 'Britain, Trade Union Membership Registers' (**search.findmypast.co.uk/search-world-records/britain-trade-union-membership-registers**) includes material held by the MRC from 26 unions in all, including digitised images of the original record books – totalling more than 3.7 million records.

Membership registers from 21 of these unions can be searched by name, including the MRC's most extensive and probably most significant series of membership registers from the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants (1872–1913) and the National Union of Railwaymen (1913–1928). Before these were indexed they were ▶

GETTY IMAGES

Register Of Members, 1916

This document from the National Union of Railwaymen is held by the Modern Records Centre, and on Findmypast (**findmypast.co.uk**)



1 Union

The full name of the union is included at the top of the double-page register. Note that the left-hand page includes the basic details of each member.

2 Member

Members' names are recorded next to their registration number. In some cases only the initials of the forenames are given.

3 Age

The age of the member when first admitted is recorded; some were as young as 15. The date of their admission is also included – these are all for 1916, but not necessarily chronological within the year.

4 Grade

This column reveals the role that each individual was employed to do.

5 Railway

The name of the railway firm is usually abbreviated, eg "G.W.R." for Great Western Railway, "L. & N.W." for the London & North Western Railway and "G.N. of Ire." for the Great Northern Railway (Ireland).

6 Branch

The branch where the member was admitted is included in the details.

very difficult to navigate, because there were 97 very large volumes arranged only in order of date.

Other trade unions in the collection include those for carpenters, joiners and woodworkers; printers, compositors and lithographers; boilermakers and iron shipbuilders; as well as a selection of smaller unions including some for civil servants and bricklayers.

Although some of the records date back to the mid-to-late 19th century, the bulk of them were created in the early 20th century.

Findmypast also includes a potted history of each of these unions and details of the records included. To find this information, scroll down within the trade union collection search page and select 'Unions included'. Several of the series cover just a few years, while others are for many decades. The collections can include quarterly membership returns, admission books, registration books, and quarterly, half-yearly and annual reports.

Many unions created rolls of honour, some with photographs of fallen members

Exactly what you may find out depends on the union and the type of record

Rolls Of Honour

Findmypast also has trade union rolls of honour in its dataset 'British Rolls of Honour and Nominal Rolls, First World War' (**search.findmypast.co.uk/search-world-records/british-rolls-of-honour-and-nominal-rolls-first-world-war**). These include five unions not searchable in its trade union registers collection: the Amalgamated Society of Watermen, Lightermen and Bargemen; the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company; the Northern Association of Publishers' Educational Representatives; the National Union of Teachers; and the Union of Engravers to Calico Printers and Paper Stainers. Some include photographs of those who died.

It is worth remembering that over time, many unions amalgamated, and the names of individual unions may have then been lost. Similarly, many railway companies merged. Nearly half of this collection relates to men and women who worked on the railways.

If you can't find your ancestor in the Findmypast collection, there are some undigitised collections still at the MRC including both membership registers and lists of members included in annual or monthly reports. The monthly reports of the National Union of Boot and Shoe Operatives from the late 19th century are one example (**mrc-catalogue.warwick.ac.uk/records/NBS/P/1/1/10**). Some branch membership registers may also survive in local collections held at county record offices.

Information Included

Exactly what you may find out about your ancestor depends on the union and the type of record. In addition to their name, the union and probably the branch that they belonged to (with county or country), you could discover their age at admission or date of birth and whether married; the year they were admitted; their exact trade; details of any transfers to another branch; and there might even be a date of death and possibly an obituary.

TOP TIP!

Finding out which industries were prevalent in the region and period that your forebear was living in can suggest their trade, and thus the unions they may have belonged to.

Resources

Take your research further

ARCHIVE

MODERN RECORDS CENTRE

a **University Library, University of Warwick, Coventry CV4 7AL**
t 024 7652 4219
e *archives@warwick.ac.uk*
w **warwick.ac.uk/services/library/mrc**

The Modern Records Centre is open weekdays, and has a wealth of material from national trade unions.

BOOKS

Tracing Your Labour Movement Ancestors
Mark Crail
Pen & Sword, 2009
Crail explains the history of the labour movement in Britain, and the sources available for researchers.

Tracing Your Trade & Craftsman Ancestors
Adèle Emm
Pen & Sword, 2015
The book's chapters cover the early guilds, merchants, shopkeepers and a range of other trades and crafts.

WEBSITE

TRADE UNION ANCESTORS

w **unionancestors.co.uk**

You can locate a specific trade union in time and place with this website's alphabetical index.

PAUL BLAKE is a genealogist, lecturer and the author of such books as *Tracing Your Insolvent Ancestors* (Pen & Sword, 2019)

GETTY IMAGES

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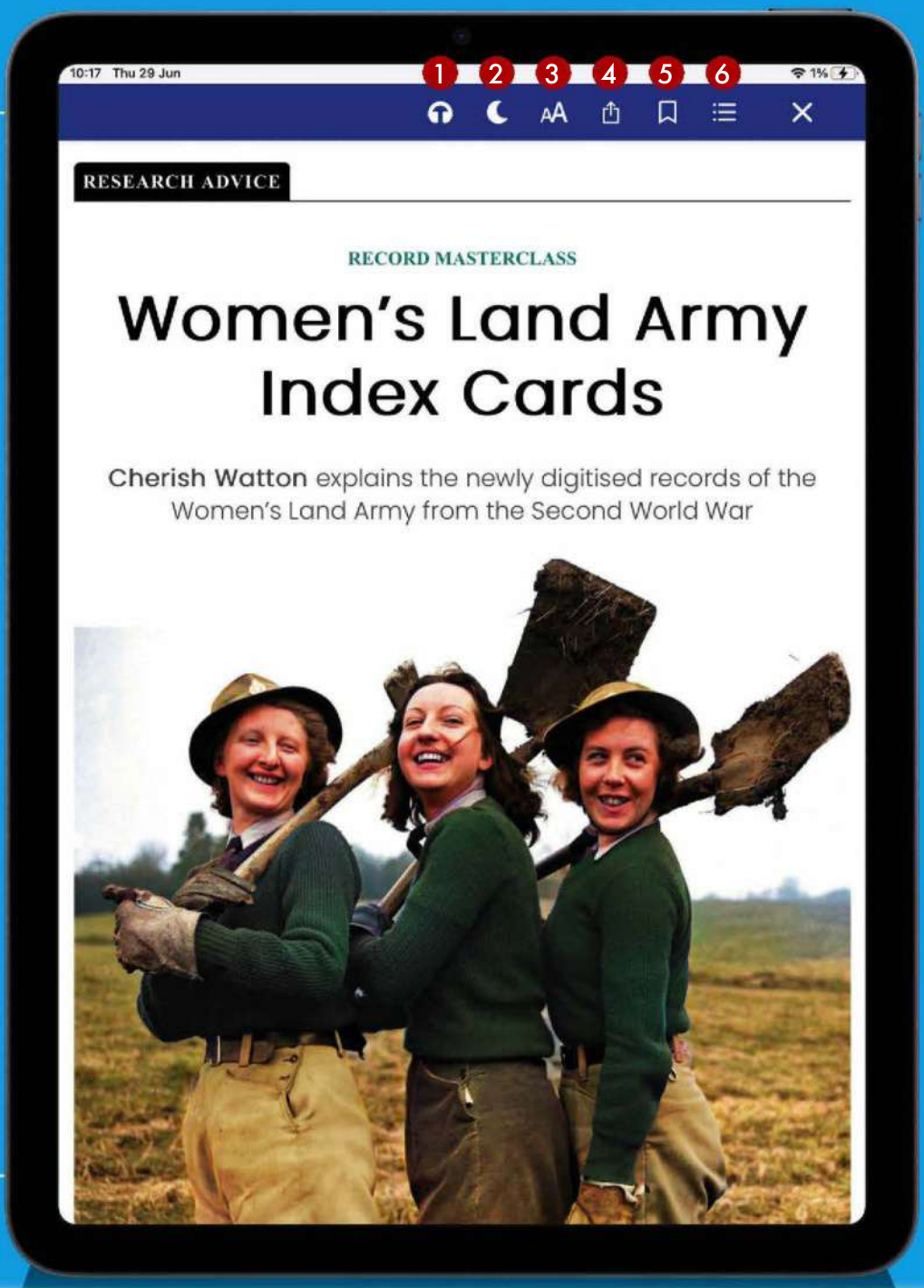

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3 Adjust Text
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4 Share
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Q&A

Our team of experts offers tips and inspiration Edited By Claire Vaughan

Katherine Cobb is a member of AGRA based in Somerset

Celia Heritage is a member of AGRA as well as an author and speaker

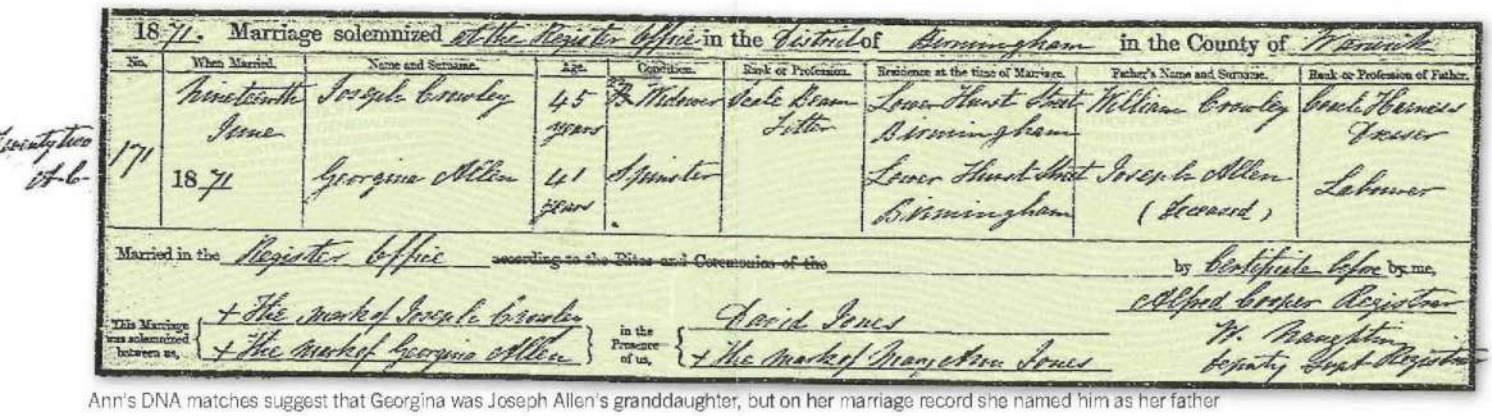
Michelle Higgs is a writer and author who specialises in social history and family history

Debbie Kennett is the author of *DNA and Social Networking*

Rebecca Probert is professor of law at the University of Exeter

Jayne Shrimpton is a professional dress historian and portrait specialist

Phil Tomaselli is a military family history expert and author



18 71. Marriage solemnized at the Register Office in the District of Birmingham in the County of Warwick

No.	When Married	Name and Surname	Age	Condition	Rank or Profession	Residence at the time of Marriage	Father's Name and Surname	Rank or Profession of Father
171	Nineteenth June 18 71	Joseph Crowley	45 years	Widower	Seale Beam Setter	Lower Hurst Street Birmingham	William Crowley	Brick Burner Labourer
		Georgina Allen	41 years	Spinster		Lower Hurst Street Birmingham	Joseph Allen (deceased)	Labourer

Married in the Register Office according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the by Certificate before me, Alfred Cooper Registrar W. Broughton Deputy Supt Registrar

This Marriage was solemnized between us, + The mark of Joseph Crowley + The mark of Georgina Allen

in the Presence of us, David Jones + The mark of Mary Ann Jones

Ann's DNA matches suggest that Georgina was Joseph Allen's granddaughter, but on her marriage record she named him as her father

Who was Georgina's real father?

Q My 3x great grandmother, Georgina (Georgiana) Allen, was born in Saltley, Warwickshire, around 1829 according to censuses (1851–1901).

Several of my DNA matches lead me to believe that Joseph Allen and Maria Heritage are either my 4x or 5x great grandparents. The amount of DNA shared with my matches suggests that Georgina may have been the child of one of Joseph and Maria's six daughters. However, Georgina named Joseph as her father on her marriage certificate in 1871. How do I track down a baptism record to confirm her parentage?

Ann Baldwin

A You don't say whether you have identified the baptisms for Joseph and Maria's other children, but the family may have been members of a nonconformist church. While most surviving nonconformist baptisms are online, many nonconformist registers do not survive, so you may never find the baptism for Georgina, which would have helped corroborate the evidence from the DNA and from Georgina's marriage record.

You should profile the Allen and Heritage families, collecting all the documentation you can find for Joseph and Maria's siblings, children and grandchildren. Studying the wider family often reveals references to your direct ancestors. If you suspect that Georgina may have been the daughter of a child of Joseph and Maria, concentrate on the lives of the couple's children. Although located in Warwickshire, Saltley was in Worcestershire diocese, so any probate records prior to 1858 will have been proved there. Findmypast (**findmypast.co.uk**) has an online index to these.

Check out Warwickshire County Record Office's catalogue too (**https://archivesunlocked.warwickshire.gov.uk/calmview/**). Don't just search on Allen and Heritage, but see what local records they hold for Saltley. You may turn up a parish scrapbook, or deeds and leases relating to the families, or there may be surviving Poor Law or bastardy records. These types of records are unlikely to have been digitised so, if you can't visit Warwick, you could get a researcher to go for you (see **agra.org.uk/member browse**), while some record offices provide a paid copying and research service.

Also investigate which other companies you can upload your DNA matches to for free or a small fee, or test with other companies. This may provide new leads. There is also a one-name study for Heritage, and you can find details of that at **https://one-name.org/name_profile/heritage/**.

Celia Heritage

Studying the wider family often reveals references to your direct ancestors

HAVE YOU HIT A BRICK WALL? Please email your questions or family photographs to the following address: **wdytyaquestions@ourmedia.co.uk**

If selected, your query will be answered on these pages. Please note that we receive a large volume of correspondence each month, and cannot reply to each message individually. You are more likely to receive a response if you keep the question and background information concise (no more than 150 words), with a clear goal of enquiry.

What relation was William to Mary?

Q The parents of my 4x great grandmother, Mary Rudd, were Ann Bragg and George Rudd. I have found banns for Mary Rudd and John Bainbridge in Workington dated 18 November 1797. Are the names on the document the fathers of Mary and John, because it mentions a William Bragg not George Rudd? Also, are the marks by the names fingerprints?
Linda Kirkwood

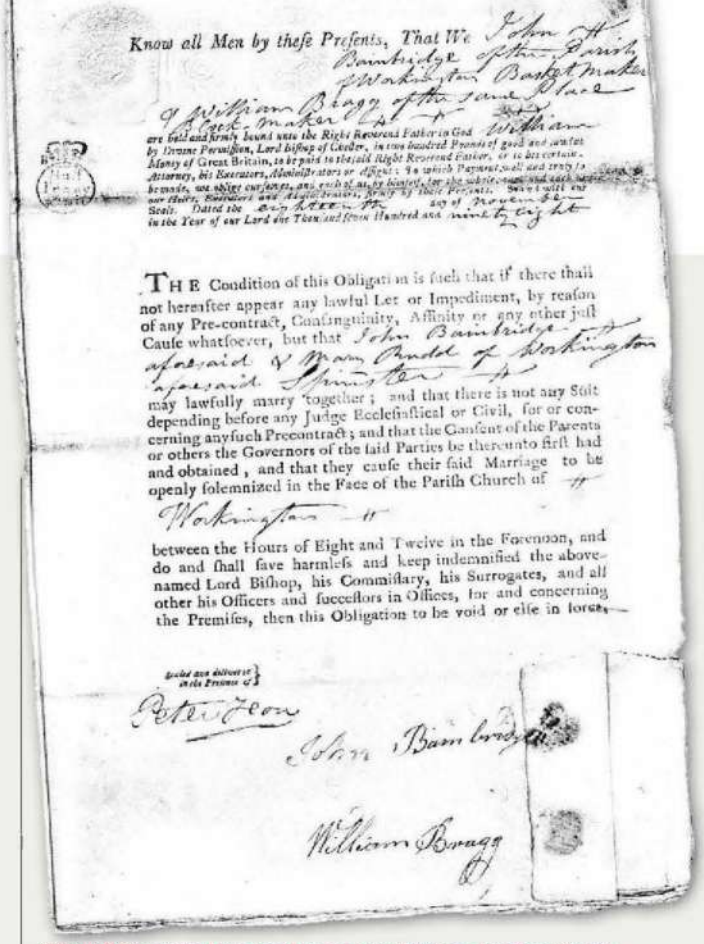
A Mary Rudd and John Bainbridge married by licence, rather than having the banns read out in church on three Sundays. This meant that their marriage could go ahead without any waiting period as soon as the licence was granted – in this case the day after.

The document you have seen is not the marriage licence, but a 'bond' – a crucial preliminary step to obtaining the licence. In it, John is confirming that there is no impediment to him marrying Mary. He is also committing to pay £200 if any of this is untrue.

The church authorities might not have been convinced that John could pay such a large sum. This is where William Bragg comes in. He is John's 'bondsman', essentially acting as surety for him. A bondsman did not have to be related to either of the couple, so there is no implication that William was Mary's father.

The marks next to their signatures are the remnants of wax seals, not the imprints of their thumbs – fingerprints were not used as a means of identifying individuals at this time. So there is no implication that John was unable to write.

Even so, as a basket-maker, John is not the kind of person who would normally choose the relatively expensive option of marrying by licence. He and Mary may have had a particular reason to want to get married quickly without drawing attention to themselves – for example if Mary was expecting their child.
Rebecca Probert


Know all Men by these Presents, That We John Bainbridge of the Parish of Workington Basket Maker and William Bragg of the same Place Basket-maker are held and firmly bound unto the Right Reverend Father in God by Divine Permission, Lord Bishop of Chester, in one hundred Pounds of good and lawful Money of Great Britain, to be paid to the said Right Reverend Father, or to his certain Attorney, his Executors, Administrators or Assigns: To which Payment well and truly to be made, we bind ourselves, and each of us by himself for the whole, and each of our Heirs, Executors and Administrators, firmly by these Presents. Sealed with our Seals. Dated the Eighteenth day of November in the Year of our Lord One Thousand Seven Hundred and ninety seven

THE Condition of this Obligation is such that if there shall not hereafter appear any lawful Let or Impediment, by reason of any Pre-contract, Consanguinity, Affinity or any other just Cause whatsoever, but that John Bainbridge aforesaid & Mary Rudd of Workington aforesaid Spinster may lawfully marry together; and that there is not any Suit depending before any Judge Ecclesiastical or Civil, for or concerning any such Precontract; and that the Consent of the Parents or others the Governors of the said Parties be thereunto first had and obtained, and that they cause their said Marriage to be openly solemnized in the Face of the Parish Church of Workington between the Hours of Eight and Twelve in the Forenoon, and do and shall save harmless and keep indemnified the above-named Lord Bishop, his Commissary, his Surrogates, and all other his Officers and successors in Offices, for and concerning the Premises, then this Obligation to be void or else in force.

Sealed and delivered in the Presence of Peter Fearon

John Bainbridge

William Bragg

William Bragg signed this bond to act as surety for a marriage licence

Where was Eleanor Ryan before 1908 and after 1915?

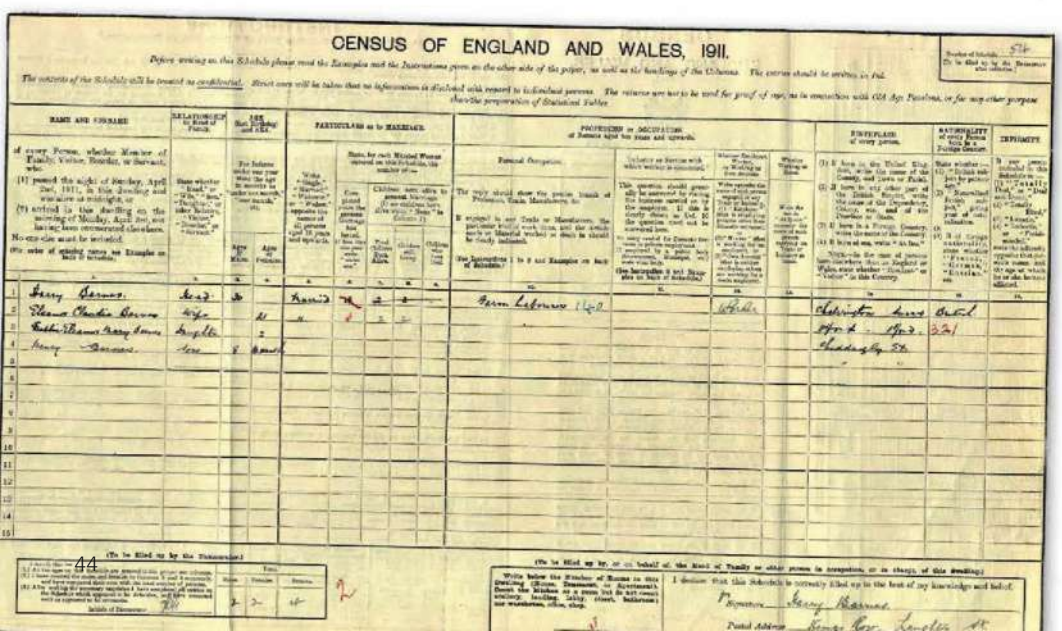
Q My great grandmother, Eleanor Claudia Ryan (born c1890, Oxford), married Harry Barnes in Eastbourne, East Sussex, in 1908. Her father's name is not on the marriage certificate. The couple had five children between 1909 and 1915. By 1921 the children are at various addresses in Eastbourne – my grandad and his brother David were in a children's home. There was no sign of Eleanor Claudia or her eldest daughter, Eleanor. What happened to them?
Bill Barnes

A I was unable to find Eleanor Claudia's birth registration anywhere in England or Ireland. While there are a few registrations without a middle name, none was registered near Oxford, where your great grandmother claimed she was born. Her father's name is not shown on Eleanor's marriage certificate, so it is likely that she was illegitimate. If so, Ryan might be her stepfather's surname and not that by which her birth was registered. However, searching the birth indexes showed that there were no Eleanor Claudia (with any surname) births registered around 1890. It seems that either her birth was unregistered or that it was registered with no middle name.

Searching the censuses for anyone in Sussex named Ryan and born in Oxford, in the 1901 census I noted a Nellie Ryan, born in Oxford c1866. Is this Eleanor's mother? Maybe she was born prior to Nellie's marriage to Richard Ryan in 1893?

The records of the children's home in which your relations were placed may help, if they survive. See the Children's Homes website (**childrenshomes.org.uk**).

Finally, I found an Eleanor Barnes in the 1929–1931 electoral registers for Hastings on Findmypast (**findmypast.co.uk**).
Katherine Cobb


CENSUS OF ENGLAND AND WALES, 1911.

The 1911 census is the last census with Eleanor on it – so what could have happened to her?

Picture Analysis

Can you tell me when this glass-plate photograph was taken?

Q My mother-in-law gave me this photograph on a glass plate a couple of years ago. She had no idea who it is of, or where it was taken, or when. I have asked all our relations on that side of the family, and they have no idea either. Can you help?
Sue Thornley

A As far as I can tell from the scan, this photographic image on a glass plate is an ambrotype or, correctly, a collodion positive. This was a 19th-century photographic format produced by studio photographers in the 1850s/early 1860s, before being superseded by *carte de visite* prints. However, traditional glass ambrotypes remained popular with open-air photographers until c1890, and many late Victorian examples like this, set outdoors in natural surroundings, survive today. Unfortunately they were seldom labelled or annotated, and further historical clues usually have to be gleaned from the visual image.

This professional photograph depicts a large group posing in a wooded setting, everyone wearing smart, fashionable clothes, including outdoor items. They could conceivably all be related, but most are males in their 20s to 40s, there are few women and only four minors: not a typical extended family group scene. Rather, excepting the infants, they may be work colleagues/company staff, or members of a local church or a social/special-interest club. Nothing here reveals the location, but the image is dateable from the group's appearance to around 1882–1886, a timeframe that might indicate candidates from among your mother-in-law's late Victorian ancestors – and could even suggest a likely context for the photograph.
Jayne Shrimpton

1 HATS
The men's stiff bowler hats display the various crown heights and curved-brim styles of the early to mid-1880s.

2 FACIAL HAIR
From the 1880s, facial hair began to decline, mature men usually sporting full beards, while younger males often wore a simple moustache.

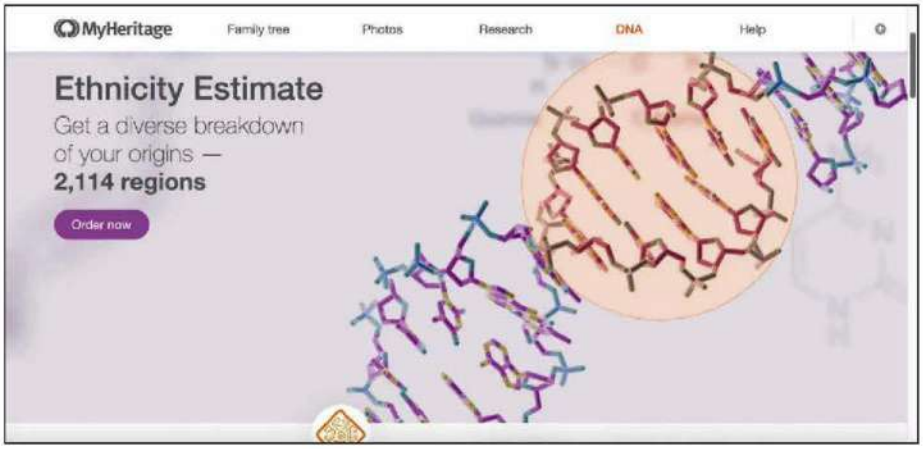
3 SUBJECT POSITION
In large group photographs, the most senior/important figures were strategically placed in the centre, so the seated man and adjacent women are prominent in this particular scene.

4 VISIBLE ACCESSORIES
The men's canes and pocket handkerchiefs and the women's umbrellas and leather gloves were all popular in the 1880s – another useful clue for working out a possible timeframe.

5 WOMEN'S CLOTHING
Female fashions provide the most accurate date, the fitted bodices, layered skirts, short cape *(left)* and brimmed hats with moderate crowns reflecting early to mid-1880s modes.

6 YOUNG SITTERS
Children were always seated on the ground in front in such group photographs, and were dressed according to their sex and age. The three boys depicted here are an infant, a schoolboy and a youth.

Which line of Irish Carews do I descend from?



MyHeritage estimates your ethnic origins, but Ancestry has a much bigger database for finding matches

Q My name is Orla Carew. I live in County Sligo, Ireland. I started a family tree and did my DNA through MyHeritage (**myheritage.com**). There have been several male Carews in Ireland over the centuries, mostly under the command of various kings and queens. Is it possible through DNA to find out exactly from which line of Carews I descend?
Orla Carew

A DNA testing is an invaluable tool, but it always needs to be used in combination with paper records, and you are dependent on finding matches with other cousins in the databases. These matches can help to verify known relationships and, if they have done more research than you, it's possible you will be able to take your tree further back in time. MyHeritage has a database of about 7.5 million people. To increase your chances of finding other Carew relatives, I would suggest taking another test with AncestryDNA (**ancestry.co.uk/dna**) because it has a much larger database of more than 23 million people. Ancestry has some powerful tools such as Common Ancestor Hints and ThruLines, which do a lot of the hard work of identifying the connections with your relatives. To get the tools to work, upload your tree and build it out for about four or five generations.

The MyHeritage and AncestryDNA tests are autosomal ones, which are best used for finding connections within about the last five or six generations. If you wish to research your more distant Carew connections, you would need to use Y-chromosome DNA testing. Since only males have a Y-chromosome, you will need to find a male Carew relative to take a Y-DNA test on your behalf. You will need to use FamilyTreeDNA, as it is the only company that has a Y-DNA matching database.

Y-DNA tests are best organised within a structured surname DNA project. There is already a Carew DNA Project at FamilyTreeDNA, although it appears to be very USA-focused: **familytreedna.com/groups/carrow/about**. You might want to set up your own project and recruit Carew men to test.
Debbie Kennett

TOP TIP **You can find out more about Y-DNA tests and how they can help you research your tree in an article on our website written by Debbie Kennett: whodoyouthinkyouaremagazine.com/tutorials/dna/what-will-a-y-dna-test-tell-you**

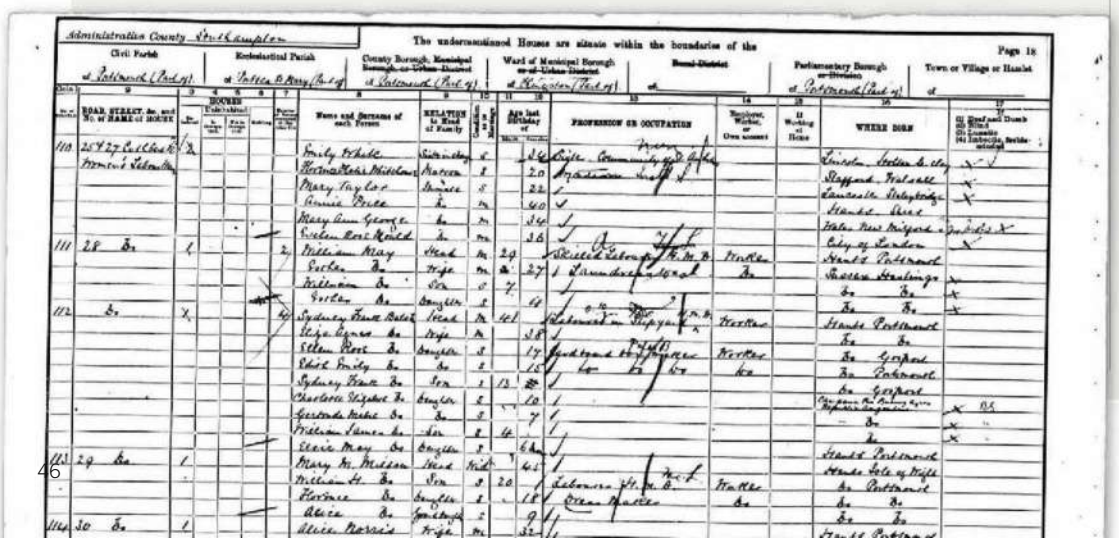
Was Emily White a state-registered nurse?

Q On the 1911 census, I have found my wife's ancestor, Emily White (born 1866 in Holton-le-Clay, Lincolnshire), as a matron at the Duxhurst Farm Colony for Inebriated Women in Reigate, Surrey. Would Emily have had to have been a state-registered nurse to work in this role? Can you also tell me when the clinic opened, when it ceased operating, and whether there are any staff records?
Sydney Baines

A If an ancestor is listed on the census as a nurse or matron, it doesn't necessarily mean that she was state-registered or even qualified. State registration of nurses in Britain began on 30 September 1921 (the register was first published in 1922). Women who began nursing in the Victorian period and were still working in the 1920s are frequently listed in the register. Emily would have been in her late 50s by 1922, but it's definitely worth checking for her name in Ancestry's collection 'UK & Ireland, Nursing Registers, 1898–1968' available at **ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/60423**.

There is another clue on the 1901 census. Emily is described as the "sister in charge" at the Cuthbert Road Women's Labour Home, Portsmouth. Her occupation was "sister, Community of St Andrews", above which the word "nun" is written. Here, "sister" may refer to her as a member of a religious order, rather than being a title for a nurse. She was at the same institution on the 1891 census, as a "church worker". It's clear that she had a strong interest in women's issues.

Established in 1895, Duxhurst was repurposed after Lady Henry Somerset's death in 1921. Sadly, there do not appear to be any staff records. However, an interesting article about life at the colony is freely available via Google Books (**tinyurl.com/ggl-bks-meth**).
Michelle Higgs


Michelle found Emily recorded as the "sister in charge" in 1901

Big Question

Did Arthur help recover the remains of the Unknown Warrior?

We love this vintage photograph that Mary emailed us depicting her younger self

Q My grandmother told me about the First World War experiences of her husband, Arthur Henry Smith (born 14 January 1876). He was at Gallipoli, and then detailed to France recovering the remains of fallen soldiers after the war. Not as a medic, but a stretcher-bearer, maybe? The story is that he was one of the soldiers chosen to accompany the coffins of deceased soldiers, brought back from the battlefields, for the one to be chosen as the Unknown Warrior for the monument in London. Is there any way of proving this?
Mary Costello

Arthur's service during the First World War included an especially grisly responsibility

A Assuming that Arthur was a soldier, I searched for his service record and Medal Index Card on Ancestry (**ancestry.co.uk**) and Findmypast (**findmypast.co.uk**), but couldn't find one. The Pension Record Cards (on Ancestry's website Fold 3; **fold3.com**) revealed that he'd initially served as Private S/1578 in the Royal Naval Division (RND). S/1578 was a Royal Marine Short Service number and, using his name and number, I found a service record in Findmypast's collection 'Royal Marines 1899–1919'.

Arthur enlisted, as a driver, on 4 December 1914 into the Royal Marines Divisional Train. His profession is noted as carman (cart driver) and the 1911 census says that he was a coal porter, making him ideal for carrying, driving and unloading the supplies required on campaign. He gave his date of birth as 14 January 1877 – making him seem just young enough to enlist.

He did basic military training at the Crystal Palace Naval Depot, and was then posted to the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force – as part of the RND – on 28 February 1915. He served (probably at the Mudros supply depot) until the end of the Gallipoli campaign in January 1916. On 18 March 1916, the RND transferred to France under the control of the British Army. RND supply companies became Army Service Corps companies, but still enlisted men from the Navy. Arthur certainly remained a marine. War Diaries for their service in France can be downloaded via The National Archives' online catalogue Discovery (**discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk**) using reference WO 95/3107/3, and for free if you log in with a TNA account.

The RND fought on the Somme (1916), Arras and Passchendaele (1917), the Somme (March 1918) and in the 1918 advance. Arthur returned to the UK in November 1918, being discharged from the Marines on 5 March 1919. Documents (not digitised) at the Fleet Air Arm Museum, Yeovilton (**nmrn.org.uk/visit-us/fleet-air-arm-museum**), confirm these details and add others: he was a driver of horse and mule transport, was given a Good Conduct Badge, and was hospitalised after being knocked down and kicked by a horse in September 1918.

The Pension Card also gives army regiment and service numbers: 692419, Labour Corps; and 6454237, Royal Fusiliers. Number 692419 is one of a series for men enlisting, in 1919, for Exhumation Companies in France. Former soldiers received normal pay plus a War Bonus. Exhumation Companies scoured the battlefields exhuming bodies for reburial until late 1921. In August 1920, several unidentified British bodies were exhumed and one was taken to London for burial as the Unknown Warrior; the rest were reburied. Arthur may well have been involved in transporting the bodies. His Royal Fusiliers service was probably given while in London.

Exhumation Companies scoured the battlefields exhuming bodies

Because he served in 1921, Arthur's army service record isn't yet released, but I've submitted a Freedom of Information request for it. It may take as long as a year before I receive it, but I'll arrange to send you a copy.
Phil Tomaselli

What regiment did this soldier belong to?

Q I found this photo when my mother died. I have no clue as to who the soldier is, and I wonder if you can identify his regiment. My cousin's father served in the Crimean War. Could it be him?
Mrs P Burton

A This is a studio photograph of a Volunteer (part-time) colour sergeant, probably taken in the late 1890s. The Volunteers were formed in 1859 when the Regular Army was stretched and the Militia had fallen into abeyance. Initially, they paid for their own weapons but gradually became attached to Regular Army regiments, becoming the Territorial Force in 1908.

Without a badge, finding the battalion is difficult. The "IV" on the water bottle probably means 4th Battalion, but unfortunately most Volunteer battalions became 4th or 5th regimental battalions. "V" "R" means Volunteer Rifles and if we could identify the first letter, it would probably tell us a place for the regiment. I can't work out what the "L" "P" stands for.

A colour sergeant was usually an experienced sergeant and I think that this man had more than 15 years, putting him in his late 30s. Unfortunately, all of the Volunteer rolls were destroyed during the Blitz, but if you can identify one of your mother's relatives about that age in 1901, you may find him in the census telling you where he lived. This information should help you identify his unit, because Volunteer units recruited locally. Also, some Volunteers served in the Second Boer War (1899–1902). Some of their service records survive, and are digitised on Ancestry (**ancestry.co.uk**) and Findmypast (**findmypast.co.uk**).
Phil Tomaselli

1 HEADWEAR
The cap is a side hat, introduced in the 1890s and worn well after the Second Boer War. Unfortunately, we can't see the badge.

2 BACKPACK
The backpack is the Slade & Wallace Valise, with two separate packs and a rolled-up blanket. It was introduced in 1888 and still used in the Second Boer War.

3 INSIGNIA
The insignia above the stripes shows he's a colour sergeant. On his shoulders are letters, possibly "L" "P".

4 WATER BOTTLE
The water bottle has "IV" above five letters: "K" (?), "V" (?), "R", "L" and "P".

5 UNIFORM DETAILS
The Austrian knot above the cuff indicates he's a Rifle Volunteer. The star indicates five years' service. I suspect there were three, meaning at least 15 years' service.

6 RIFLE
The rifle has a magazine in front of the trigger. This and the general shape make it a Lee-Metford, introduced in 1888, but gradually replaced by the Lee-Enfield from 1895 onwards.

MERCHANDISE

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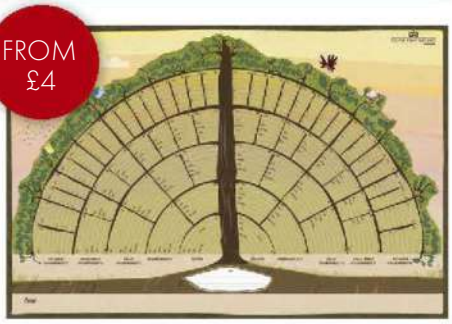

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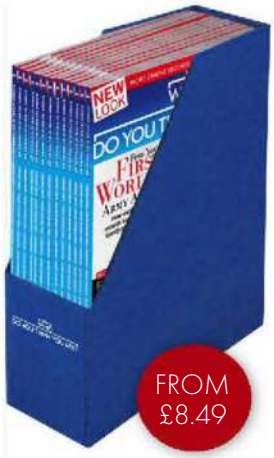

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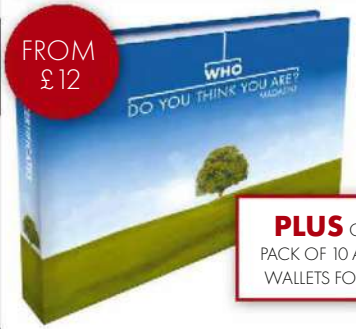

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LOCAL INDUSTRY

Celebrating our ancestors' work in key trades

Wool Power

A woman from the Shetland Islands sits by her spinning-wheel winding a skein of wool held by a young boy, c1910

The Shetland Islands are the northernmost area of the UK, about 50 miles north-east of Orkney. The archipelago is also only 140 miles west of Norway, and was under Norwegian rule from the 9th century until 1472, when the Northern Isles were annexed by Scotland. The Shetland Islands have a number of distinctive animal breeds, including the small but tough Shetland sheep, whose very fine, soft but strong wool is world famous – often in garments made using the traditional Fair Isle knitting technique named after the most southerly of the Shetland Islands. You can learn about the local industry today via the website of the annual Shetland Wool Week (**shetlandwoolweek.com**), and explore the islands' heritage and culture on the website of Shetland Museum and Archives in Lerwick (**shetlandmuseumandarchives.org.uk**).

GETTY IMAGES

Find your ancestors in historic newspapers

Nick Peers shares his expert tips for searching Findmypast's extensive newspaper archives

Findmypast (**findmypast.co.uk**) has revamped its newspaper search tool, and the results are impressive. With more than 72 million British and Irish historical newspaper pages in its collection, any mention of your relations in the national or local press is now much easier to track down.

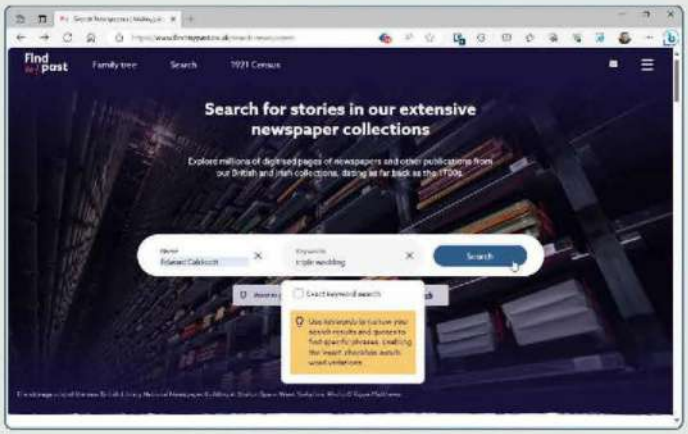
The revamped tool offers much smarter search functions, and has both simple and advanced options to steer you towards possible mentions of family members through the centuries. It's also available from the site's main search tool, and any articles that you find can now be 'clipped' and added to the relevant individual(s) in your tree.

More than 28 million free-to-view articles are available; simply select 'Free to view' under the 'Articles access' dropdown in the search-results page to see them. To view the rest you'll need a 'Pro' or 'Premium' subscription; visit **findmypast.co.uk/subscribe** for the costs of subscribing at these levels for one month, three months or a year.

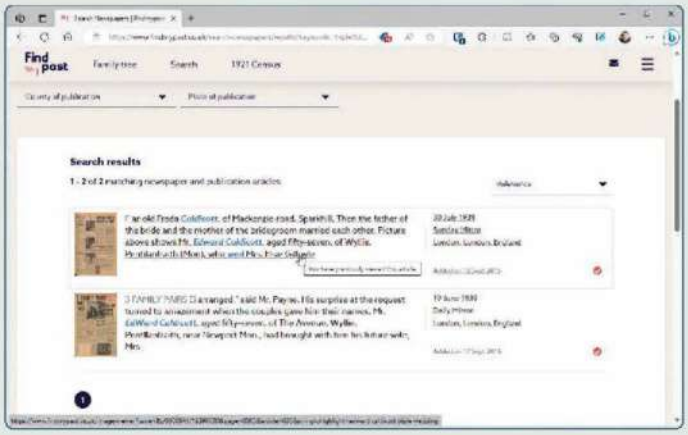
TOP TIP!

If you're struggling to read the scan of an article, click the 'Image Tools' button to adjust its brightness, contrast and saturation, or invert its colours.

In this month's 'Tech Tips', we'll walk you through searching the collection, plus how to review, collate and share discoveries. Who knows, you might learn – as I did – that a relation made the national papers as part of a triple family wedding…

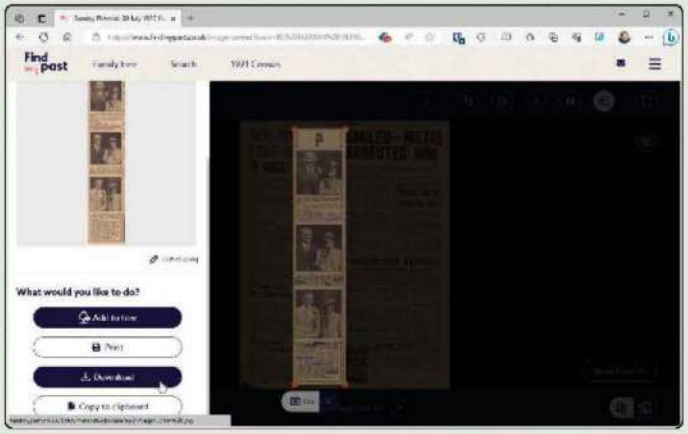


1 Perform A Basic Search After logging into your Findmypast account, go directly to **findmypast.co.uk/search-newspapers** where you'll see the website's simple search tool. Enter the name of a particular ancestor and some relevant keywords as advised. Click 'Search' when you're finished.

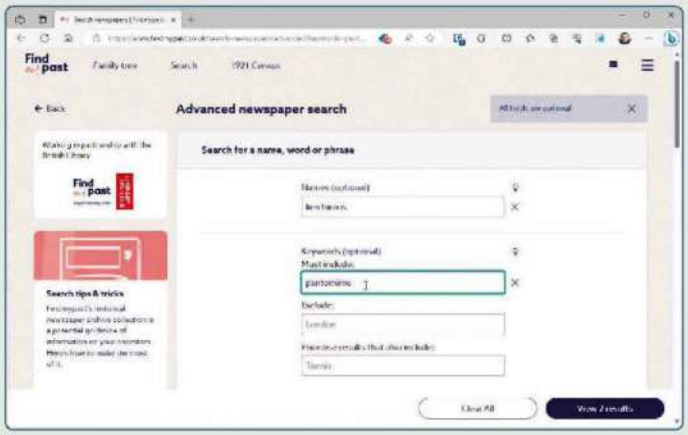


2 Review The Search Results If only a few results are returned, you'll be shown a summary of each one along with the name of the newspaper, the location where it was published, and the date of the report. Don't be surprised if the transcriptions are full of errors. Click an article to view the original newspaper image.

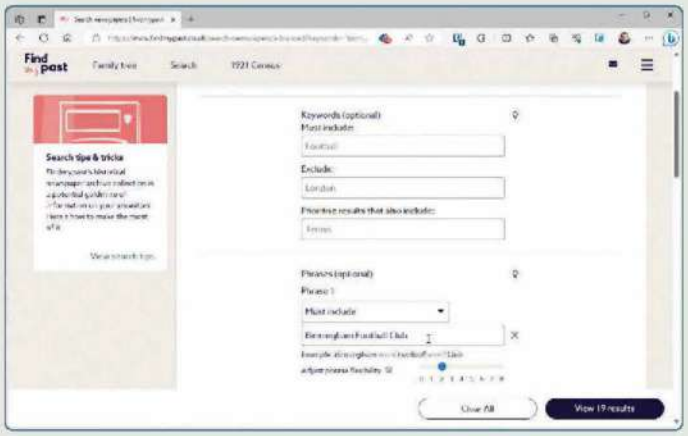
3 Review The Image The newspaper page will appear in its own viewer, which will automatically zoom into the article that contains the matching search terms. Click and drag the mouse to move around the page, and use your scroll wheel or the on-screen buttons to zoom in and out.



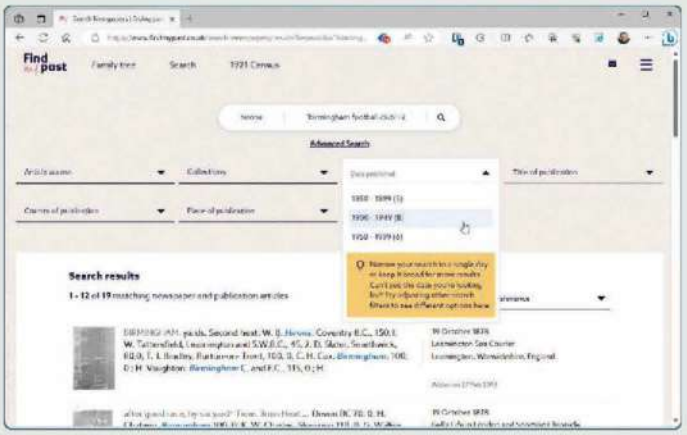
4 Save The Page If your relative is mentioned in the article, you have several choices using the buttons at the top of the page: click the 'Crop' button to select part of the page to clip as a screenshot you can attach to someone in your Findmypast tree, print, copy to the clipboard, or download to your computer in JPG format.



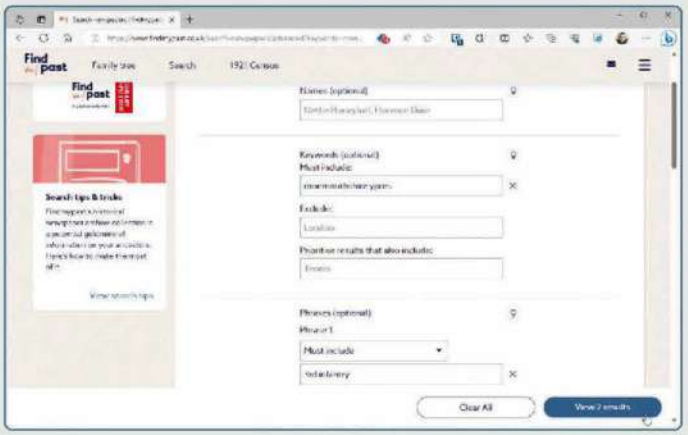
5 Try An Advanced Search If you don't find what you're looking for, return to the main search page and choose the 'Advanced Search' option. You'll see that all of the fields are optional – and as you enter names and keywords, the 'View x results' button updates as you move between fields to show you how many matches there are.



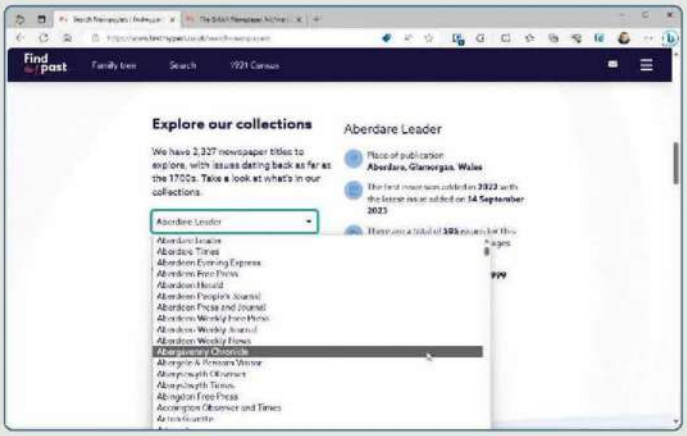
6 Refine Your Search Scroll down and you'll see that you can also search for phrases (exact or 'flexible' using the slider) plus restrict the results to exact words and phrases only, which will significantly reduce the number of results. Click the 'View' button at any time to review what's been found.



7 Refine By Date, Place And Title When reviewing results or setting up an advanced search, you'll see options to filter your search by date, publication title or location of publication, allowing you to focus in on a specific period and place where your forebears are likely to have lived. Again, results update in real time.



8 Broaden Your Search If you can't find a specific ancestor, consider widening your search terms – try known misspellings or variations on their surname, for example, or exclude the first name. Also consider removing their name entirely, and focusing on specific places or events that they may have been part of instead.



9 Browse More Widely Given the hit-and-miss nature of newspaper transcriptions, you should also consider browsing relevant local titles around the date of events that you suspect may have warranted a mention. To do this, return to the main search page and scroll down to browse by newspaper title.

Dancefloor

Felicity Day explores why our Georgian ancestors loved to dance

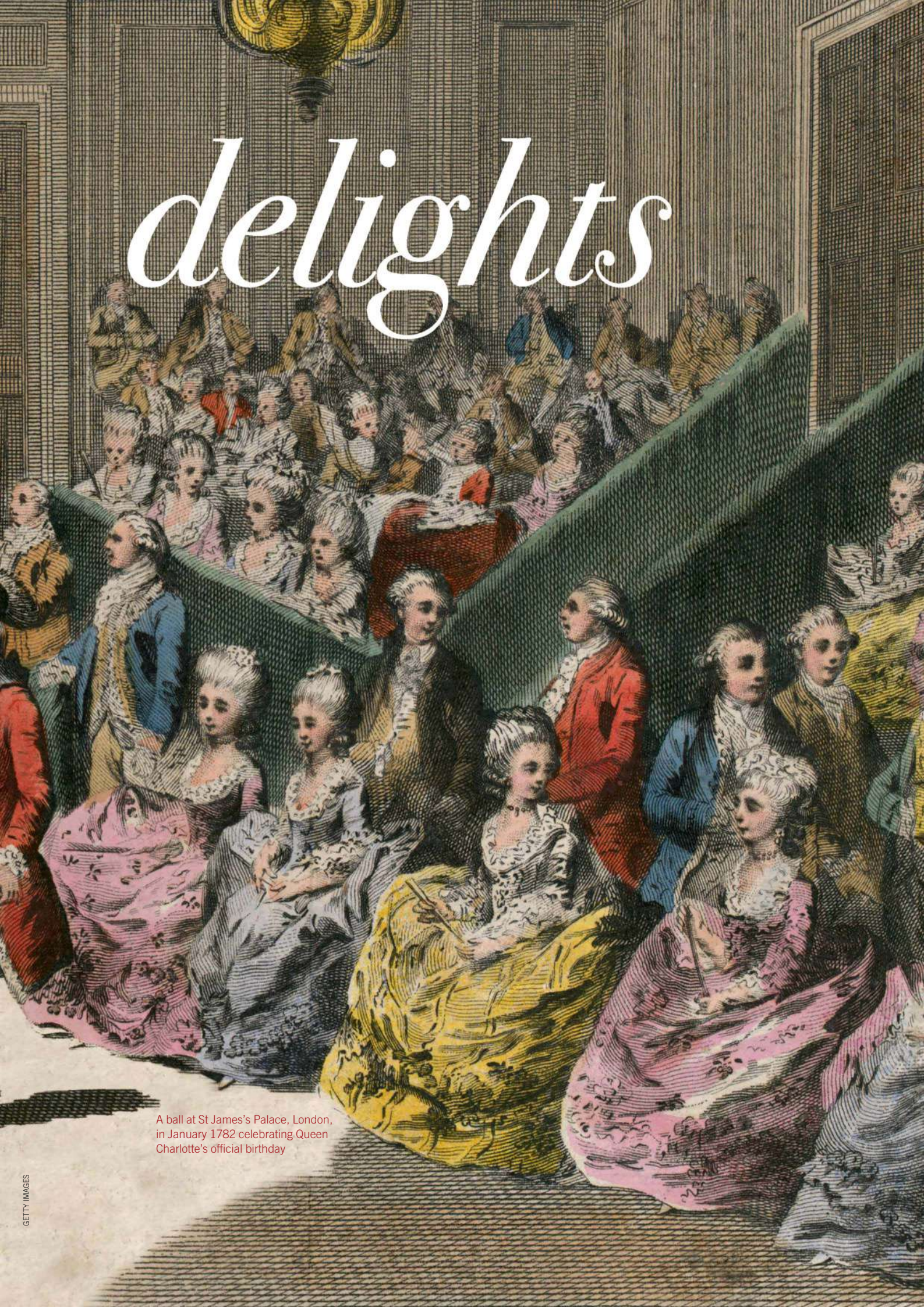
Christmas time 1798 saw Jane Austen attending an assembly ball in Basingstoke. "There were twenty Dances & I danced them all, & without any fatigue," she boasted afterwards in a letter to her sister Cassandra. Both "fond of dancing" and good at it, the novelist was not unlike so many of our Georgian forebears, for whom dancing was a huge part of social life. In cities, small market towns, spas and seaside resorts, so many of their leisure hours were spent on the dancefloor.

Dancing's sheer sociability was its biggest attraction. Whether it was a relatively humble "harvest frolic" – like the one Sally Gunton, a maidservant in a Norfolk parsonage, had permission to stay out all night for in 1801 – or a grand ball in a London mansion like Mrs Beaumont's in May 1814, which had two bands providing music and supper served on silver plate, dancing brought people together in shared entertainment; one of few activities that men and women could enjoy together.

The mainstay of any formal ball was the country dances, where partners stood facing one another, in two lines formed long-ways down the room. They encouraged social interaction, usually involving all of the participating couples meeting each other at least once; plus a period of literally 'standing up' together, waiting for their turn to perform. The length of a dance depended on how many joined in, but to be on the dancefloor with one partner for 30 minutes or more was not unusual – ample time to chat, both with them and other couples who were standing nearby.

Fellow dancers might be old friends or new acquaintances. Balls, especially the public

delights



A ball at St James's Palace, London, in January 1782 celebrating Queen Charlotte's official birthday

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assembly balls in purpose-built rooms and local inns that genteel country-dwellers like Austen attended, were an excellent way to extend your social circle, typically drawing in people from within a 20-mile radius, too far for regular visiting. And people of guaranteed respectability, too, since few outside the rising middle classes could afford the tickets – 5s for a whole winter season, or 2s 6d a ball at Southampton's Dolphin Inn in the 1790s.

A Component Of Courtship

The potential for meeting new people made ballrooms easily the best place to go looking for love. And, since it was the most socially acceptable way for a young, single woman to spend time one-to-one with a man, dancing was vital to courtship, offering an almost unparalleled opportunity to chat and flirt. The close proximity to a member of the opposite sex, with eye contact and hands touching, was also a rare – and thrilling – chance to feel physical attraction.

Learning to dance was therefore considered essential for members of the leisured classes. Both men and women were given lessons in their childhood, and maintained their competence through constant practice. For although little skill was required to perform the steps of the country dances (or the cotillions and quadrilles that were other staples of the Georgian ballroom), remembering the different patterns to be traced across the floor in each, and the combinations of taking and crossing hands, rising on tiptoes, twirling and clapping, made it a complicated venture – especially as new dances were constantly being invented. For example, it's been estimated that more than 25,000 dances were created in England between 1730 and 1830.

Sedate as they might look, the country dances were physically as well as mentally demanding: the sister of one sporting viscount noted in 1809 that he was keeping his weight down for the hunting season "by dancing most perseveringly" at every opportunity. Ladies, for whom there were few socially approved forms of exercise, appreciated balls for the same reason.

They could certainly be a good workout: starting at 9pm or 10pm, there were usually three to four hours of dancing before a break for supper, and at least two more afterwards, with fashionable ball-goers rarely retreating home before 5am. In a room that

Dancers at Hackney Assembly in the early 19th century

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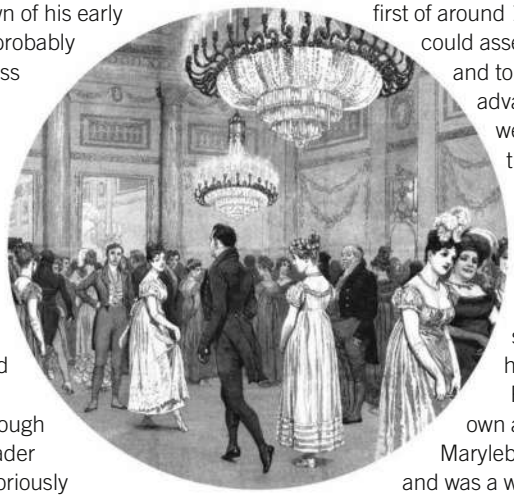
James Paine 1778–1855

The band leader who pioneered the quadrille

Band leader James Paine was one of many who profited from the Georgian passion for dancing. Little is known of his early life, although he was probably born into a middle-class family, but at some point he trained as a musician. By the time the Regency began in 1811, he had a band of his own and a thriving business, providing music at the balls of the nobility, gentry and even royalty.

It was, however, through his employment as leader of the band at the notoriously exclusive Almack's assembly rooms in London – where the aristocracy danced during the Season – that he rose to wider fame.



When he published a book of steps and music for the newly popular quadrille in 1816 (his first of around 17 collections), he could assert with credibility – and to great commercial advantage – that they were "as danced" at the fashionable club *(pictured)*. The figures he outlined became a standard, followed in ballrooms nationwide, and are still associated with his name today.

Paine went on to own a music shop on Marylebone High Street, and was a wealthy man by the time he died in 1855. Along with seven properties and shares in a copper mine, he left £1,500 in cash to his children.

blazing candles and a crush of people made "so hot that you could roast a chicken!", as one wit put it, dancing every dance as Austen did was no mean feat.

Like A Porpoise In A Storm

In fact, balls were not dissimilar to modern nights on the town; ballrooms were noisy with ceaseless chatter, and alcohol flowed freely. Not all dancers turned up sober, either. At one ball in Chichester during the 1802 Goodwood races, "many a dancing man" was seen "rolling about like a porpoise in a storm" owing to his earlier indulgence.

Of course, the behaviour in polite society was never as free – nor the capering as energetic – as among the working classes. Their jigs and reels at festivals, hiring fairs and on feast days prioritised "exertion and agility". Dancers shouted, swapped hats, stole kisses as they galloped down a set, and jigged with arms around each other's waists, as well.

Only with the waltz did something similar to the latter invade upper-class British ballrooms, in the opening years of the 19th century. It came as a shock – and not just because of its physical intimacy and seemingly blatant sexuality ("hands… may freely range in public sight" lamented even the libertine Lord Byron). Many felt that dancing lost its social benefit since dancers became a solitary unit, turned inwards and focused only on each other, and conversation was now secondary to movement.

However, the headiness of spinning around the room in someone's arms proved hard to resist, and it was fast-paced 'couples' dances' that kept the Victorians on their feet. The polka, spreading to Britain "like a contagion" in the 1840s, attracted men, particularly, with its hectic motion that required partners to clasp each other tightly.

Along with other imports like the mazurka and the galop, the polka was danced – and adored – across the class divide. The genteel retreated behind closed doors, but working people increasingly went out – to gin palaces, 'shilling dancing-rooms' and civic halls, whose 'Cinderellas' (balls that ended by midnight) were a haunt of respectable shop-workers and waitresses seeking a spouse.

But the pastime so beloved by the Georgians fell behind the beat in the latter 19th century, less popular than the entertainment at pubs and music halls, and declining in high society as men cast off their dancing shoes. Only the arrival of infectious new music and wildly modern moves from the USA would put the spring in social dancing's step again.

This cartoon showing the polka is included in a book published in 1849

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FELICITY DAY is a historian and the author of *The Game of Hearts: The Lives and Loves of Regency Women* (Blink, 2022)

Resources

Take your research further

BOOK

An Analysis of Country Dancing
Thomas Wilson
W Calvert, 1808
In this illustrated manual, a Georgian dance master outlines figures used in country dancing. It can be read via Google Books: **tinyurl.com/ggl-bks-dancing**.

DOCUMENTARY

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE: HAVING A BALL
BBC, 2013
This 90-minute documentary recreates Austen's Netherfield Ball. You can watch excerpts at **tinyurl.com/bbc-co-uk-ball**, while the DVD costs £4.99 from Amazon (**amazon.co.uk**).

MUSEUM

BATH ASSEMBLY ROOMS
a **Bennett Street, Bath BA1 2QH**
t 01225 466414
e *bathassemblyrooms@nationaltrust.org.uk*
w **nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/bath-bristol/bath-assembly-rooms**
Take a tour through one of the splendid spaces where our high-society forebears danced.

WEBSITES

REGENCYDANCES.ORG
w **regencydances.org**
Garth Notley's unmissable site includes diligently researched papers providing information on everything from dance steps and assembly-room rules to the life stories of teachers and band leaders. You can also see videos recreating popular dances.

SOUND HERITAGE
w **sound-heritage.ac.uk/dance/domestic-social-dance-georgian-britain**
This research project from the University of Southampton examines the function of music in the life of historic houses. Its wonderfully illustrated website includes audio recordings.

‘A Victorian Court Case Solved My Mystery’

CELEBRATING YOUR DISCOVERIES

Tim Cook was perplexed when he couldn’t find his forebear on the 1881 census. A search of old newspapers online revealed an explanation that took his breath away, as he explains to **Gail Dixon**

Prior to mid-Victorian times, divorce was only accessible to wealthy, influential people, most of whom were men. Each individual case required a private Act of Parliament to be passed.

Even after the major reforms that were introduced by the 1857 Matrimonial Causes Act, divorce remained a complex, expensive and taboo subject for the Victorians. As a result, many working-class couples chose to separate and perhaps cohabit with another partner.

Tim Cook was faced with a puzzle regarding an elusive ancestor. He explains how the mystery unravelled.

TIM COOK lives near Peterborough, Cambridgeshire. Now retired, he latterly worked in the charity sector

My Brick Wall

During the spring lockdown of 2020, I made use of the spare time by taking out a one-month subscription to the British Newspaper Archive (**britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk**), which provides online access to the British Library’s vast collection. I can heartily recommend the website to other readers.

Using the search filters for location and date, I began entering ancestors’ names to see what turned up. Amazingly, this gave me a breakthrough regarding a mystery in the life of my great great grandfather, John Dawes (sometimes spelled Daws).

I had previously found a record of John’s baptism which took place in Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, in 1833. His parents were Mary (née Woodward) and her husband Thomas Dawes, who worked as a “higgler” – ie a pedlar.

John became a stonemason and married Ann Redfin (or Redfern) in 1853 at Sutton-in-Ashfield, Nottinghamshire. The couple settled in Mansfield a few miles to the north-east and had four children – Eliza, Mary Ann, Jane and William.

I had an almost complete collection of census returns for John, with the notable exception of 1881. I could find Ann, living with Eliza and William in Mansfield that year, but there was no sign of her husband.

Ann died in 1887, and John reappeared in Mansfield in the 1891 and 1901 census returns as a widower. The mystery of where he was on the night of the census in 1881 continued to frustrate me.

My Eureka Moment

I typed John’s name into the British Newspaper Archive search bar, and limited the date range to the 1880s. A number of hits appeared regarding John Dawes and the so-called “Whiston Bigamy Trial” of 1882.

This came as a bolt out of the blue, and initially I thought that it couldn’t be ‘my’ John Dawes. However, several of the trial reports mentioned Ann Redfin, her marriage to John in 1853,

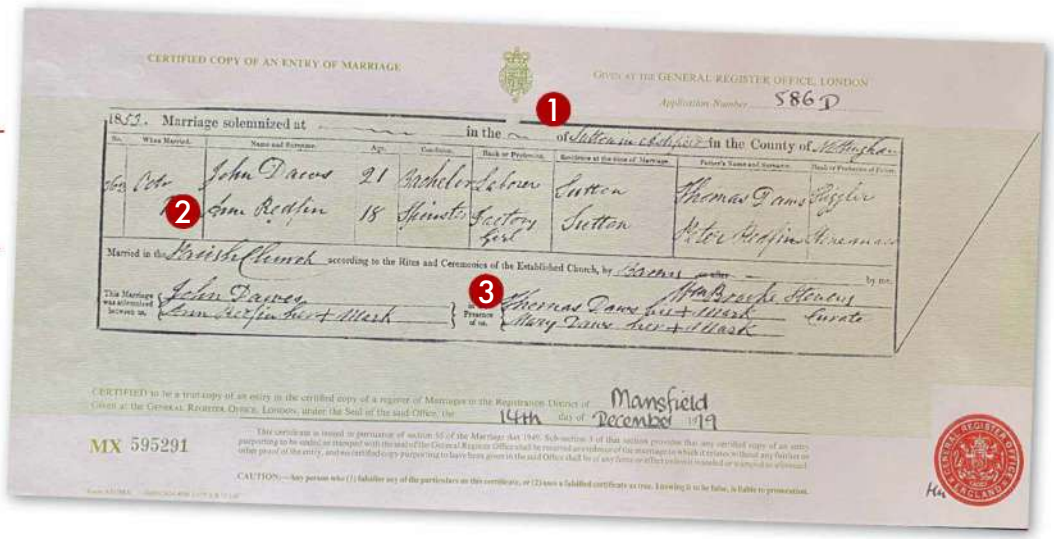
Marriage Record, 1853

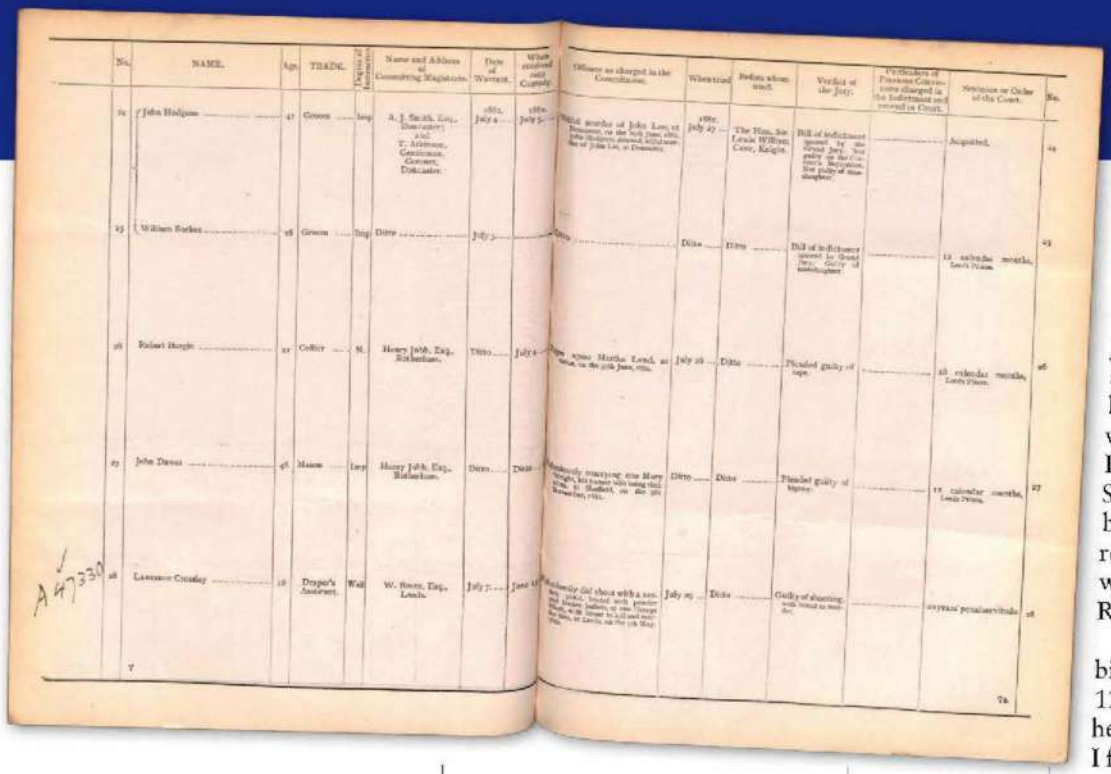
This document gave Tim key clues about his ancestor

1 Sutton-in-Ashfield
John Dawes’ first marriage took place at the parish church in Sutton-in-Ashfield, Nottinghamshire.

2 Ann Redfin
John’s first wife was three years younger and a “factory girl”.

3 Witnesses
The witnesses to the marriage were Thomas Dawes, John’s brother, and Mary, John’s sister-in-law. It was Mary who testified at the bigamy trial in 1882, stating that she had attended John’s first marriage and that his wife Ann was still alive.





and the name of a relative who testified. I was convinced that they were indeed my ancestors.

It seems that John had an eye for the ladies, and had moved in with a widow named Mary Wright in Whiston, Rotherham. The couple married in Sheffield on 5 November 1881, and the marriage record describes John as a bachelor.

His absence from the census taken on 3 April 1881 was explained by the fact that he was living near Mary Wright in Whiston that year, a few months prior to their wedding.

I couldn't find any record of John and Ann divorcing, which would have been unusual at the time, so the second marriage was definitely bigamous. How had the subterfuge come to light?

My Breakthrough

Mary Wright was an innocent party, which I learnt from several newspaper reports. The articles in the *Sheffield Independent* were particularly illuminating.

John stood trial for bigamy at West Riding Police Court, Rotherham, on 23 June 1882, and Mary gave evidence in court.

She stated that a few months after they wed, she received a letter informing her that John had been married before and that his first wife was still alive. Mary confronted John with the letter, but he denied its allegations.

Mary felt "uneasy" and went to Mansfield to meet Ann, who confirmed her suspicions. The second 'marriage' must have come to an end at this point.

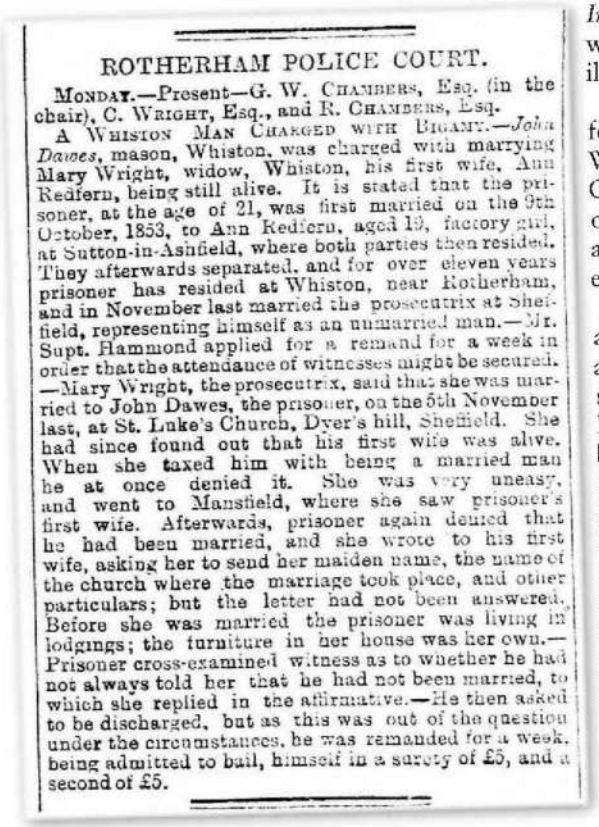
After the first hearing, John was released on bail so that further evidence could be gathered. The following week, a witness called Mary Dawes appeared in court. She was married to John's brother Thomas, and remembered attending the wedding of John and Ann Redfin at Sutton-in-Ashfield.

John pleaded guilty to bigamy and was sentenced to 12 months' hard labour, which he served in Leeds Prison. I found him recorded on a calendar of prisoners for 1882 on Ancestry (**ancestry.co.uk**).

By the time that the 1891 census was taken, Ann had died in Mansfield aged only 52. Mary Wright had also passed away in Rotherham at the age of 55.

John returned to live in Mansfield as a lodger with another widow, Mary Cutler. He died in 1906 in Mansfield Union Workhouse with his daughter Jane Cook, my great grandmother, in attendance.

When John was alive divorce was very difficult and expensive. Perhaps he thought that if he relocated, his bigamy would never be found out. Clearly, a move from Mansfield to Rotherham wasn't far enough.



ROTHERHAM POLICE COURT.

MONDAY.—Present—G. W. CHAMBERS, Esq. (in the chair), C. WRIGHT, Esq., and R. CHAMBERS, Esq.

A WHISTON MAN CHARGED WITH BIGAMY.—*John Dawes*, mason, Whiston, was charged with marrying Mary Wright, widow, Whiston, his first wife, Ann Redfern, being still alive. It is stated that the prisoner, at the age of 21, was first married on the 9th October, 1853, to Ann Redfern, aged 19, factory girl, at Sutton-in-Ashfield, where both parties then resided. They afterwards separated, and for over eleven years prisoner has resided at Whiston, near Rotherham, and in November last married the prosecutrix at Sheffield, representing himself as an unmarried man.—Mr. Supt. Hammond applied for a remand for a week in order that the attendance of witnesses might be secured. —Mary Wright, the prosecutrix, said that she was married to John Dawes, the prisoner, on the 5th November last, at St. Luke's Church, Dyer's hill, Sheffield. She had since found out that his first wife was alive. When she taxed him with being a married man he at once denied it. She was very uneasy, and went to Mansfield, where she saw prisoner's first wife. Afterwards, prisoner again denied that he had been married, and she wrote to his first wife, asking her to send her maiden name, the name of the church where the marriage took place, and other particulars; but the letter had not been answered. Before she was married the prisoner was living in lodgings; the furniture in her house was her own.—Prisoner cross-examined witness as to whether he had not always told her that he had not been married, to which she replied in the affirmative.—He then asked to be discharged, but as this was out of the question under the circumstances, he was remanded for a week, being admitted to bail, himself in a surety of £5, and a second of £5.

The *Sheffield Independent* ran several articles about John's crime

John Dawes spent 12 months in Leeds Prison for "feloniously marrying one Mary Wright"

HAVE YOU BROKEN THROUGH A BRICK WALL?

Share your family story with us and you could appear in the magazine!

Please write to us at the address on page 6 or email *wdytyaeditorial@ourmedia.co.uk*

Reader Tips

What advice does Tim have for breaking down brick walls?

- Look at obscure records, prison calendars and regional newspapers. Make sure you adopt a wide search to see what might come up.
- Cross-check records on various databases in case of mistakes. I regularly find details registered differently, with incorrect ages or misspelled names.
- Always keep an open mind, and revisit sources you've already searched with fresh eyes.

Remembering Lanarkshire's Asylum Inmates

Rosemary Collins talks to the organisers of a project to commemorate the patients of a Scottish mental hospital

One of the commemorative metal plaques in Hartwood Paupers Cemetery

The Lanark District Asylum, also known as Hartwood Hospital, opened in 1895 near Shotts in North Lanarkshire. It was initially used primarily as an asylum for 'pauper lunatics' from local workhouses. After the founding of the National Health Service in 1948 it continued to operate as a psychiatric hospital, changing its name to Hartwood Hospital, until its closure in 1998. Within its extensive grounds was a cemetery where 1,255 people are buried. They died between 1895 and 1952 and all but three of them were patients, mainly paupers.

Local women Loraine Duncan and Rhona Barr have now started Friends of Hartwood Paupers Cemetery (FOHCP; **fohpc.com**), a project to preserve the cemetery and ensure that the people buried there are not forgotten. As Loraine explains, the project has an unusual origin – she watched the 2017 Disney Pixar film *Coco*, in which the souls of the dead are lost forever when no one alive remembers them. This encouraged her to research her own family history with her sister, which led them to a war cemetery in France to visit the grave of their great great uncle, who was killed fighting in the First World War. They met a 72-year-old woman who'd volunteered to look after his grave, which inspired Loraine to look after Hartwood Paupers Cemetery with her friend Rhona.

The dead have got their names back now, and they're all remembered

Since then, FOHCP has restored the cemetery to a place the whole community can visit, clearing away rubbish and foliage, repairing the broken gates and planting new flowers. At the same time, the group were determined to remember the lives of the people buried there. The majority have no headstone, but are commemorated by numbered metal plaques.

Loraine says that the cemetery records had only been saved by a stroke of luck: "The records for the graveyard had been put in a skip when they emptied the hospital, but Tony Fitzpatrick, a Hartwood staff nurse, took them down to North Lanarkshire Heritage Centre in Motherwell. We spent months visiting the archives, so that we could transcribe all of the names and match them to individual graves."

All 1,255 people are now named on FOHCP's website, together with information about their lives. The project's volunteers used family history records in their research, and frequently sourced stories from patients' living relations.

Many of the people in the cemetery were committed to the asylum for reasons that would not make sense today. For example, Augustus Oliphant (1859–1902) was married but the records point to him being homosexual, and that may explain why he was a patient. Other inmates include epileptics and unmarried mothers.

On the project's website, local poet Paul Colvin pays tribute to those who were buried there: "This is Hartwood Sanatorium / From another time and place / But what lies below this hallowed ground / Is all of ours disgrace."

"The website caused a bit of controversy, we'll not lie about that," Rhona says. "A lot of people who still live in the area worked in the hospital, and they do not want to think about all of the bad stuff that happened there. In fact we have been asked to take it down several times, but we refused, because we cannot hide the fact that this happened."

Loraine adds that she's proud of what they've achieved as a project: "The dead have all got their names back now, and they're all remembered."

TELL YOUR STORY

Share your local history project with us and you could appear in the magazine!

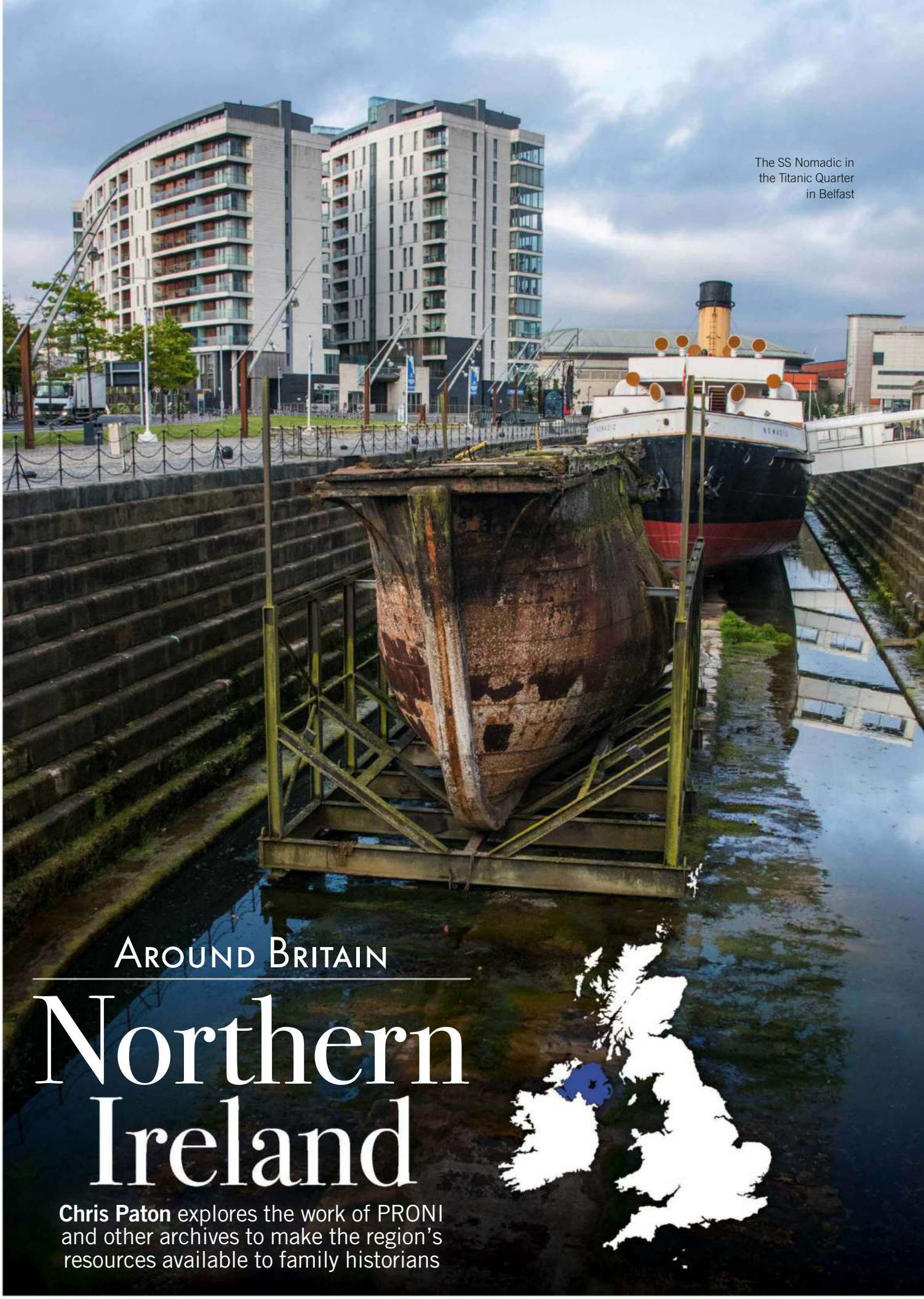
Please write to us at the address on page 6 or email *rosemary.collins@ourmedia.co.uk*

Get Involved

Friends Of Hartwood Paupers Cemetery
w **fohpc.com**

You can find out more about the project and view the names from the cemetery on its website, or by joining its Facebook Group at **tinyurl.com/fb-group-fohcp**.

SANDRA WHYTE



The SS Nomadic in the Titanic Quarter in Belfast

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Around Britain

Northern Ireland

Chris Paton explores the work of PRONI and other archives to make the region's resources available to family historians

Although not within Britain, the six counties of Northern Ireland – Antrim, Armagh, Derry/Londonderry, Down, Fermanagh and Tyrone – have been a part of the UK since 1 January 1801. Historically within the province of Ulster in the country of Ireland, the counties were reconstituted into the self-governing territory of Northern Ireland following the island's Partition in 1921. Just a year later, in December 1922, Ireland's other 26 counties elected to leave the UK altogether, with Northern Ireland remaining.

The area covered by Northern Ireland has a fascinating, albeit troubled, past. Much of the region was colonised by Scots and English folk in early 17th-century schemes, including the Hamilton and Montgomery settlements in Down and Antrim (1606), and through the Plantation of Ulster (1609) for the remaining counties. As an attempt to pacify the part of Gaelic Ireland most troublesome to the English Crown, the most striking difference with the settlers was the Protestant religions that they brought with them, in the forms of Anglicanism and Presbyterianism, which conflicted with the Catholicism that was then dominant across Ireland. This religious divide has perpetuated to an extent to the present day, consistently entangled with politics, most recently through the horrors of the Troubles (1969–1998).

The Origin Of Groni

As a consequence of Partition, Northern Ireland is the only country in the UK that has had to reinvent its national record-gathering facilities while still a member. One of its first new repositories, the General Register Office for Northern Ireland (GRONI; **nidirect.gov.uk/contacts/general-register-office-northern-ireland**), was established in Belfast in 1922, and its records of births, marriages and deaths can be searched at **https://geni.nidirect.gov.uk**. In 1923 a new Northern Irish national archive was also created, after Ireland's original national repository, the Dublin-based Public Record Office of Ireland, was destroyed in the previous year during the Irish Civil War.

The Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI; **nidirect.gov.uk/proni**) celebrated its centenary in 2023 through its 'PRONI 100: Celebrating a Century' commemorations. Located today at a purpose-built facility in Belfast's docks area, which opened in 2011, the archive's many holdings include records from Northern Ireland's parliaments, private individuals, companies and organisations. The centenary has offered archivist Stephen Scarth, head of public services since 2010, an opportunity to reflect on the organisation's achievements: "PRONI's greatest success has been to acquire surrogates and replacements for many of the records lost in the fire at the Public Record Office in June 1922, which resulted in the loss of seven centuries of Irish records. Having started with no records, we now have more than three million, dating from 1219 onwards."

Stephen has no hesitation in identifying the most useful. "Our

Textile workers fold and starch linen in Belfast, c1900

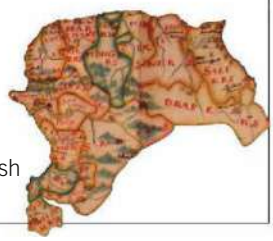
The area covered by Northern Ireland has a fascinating, albeit troubled, past

Northern Ireland Through The Ages

Historical highlights from the region

1609

The Plantation of Ulster follows the 1607 'Flight of the Earls' when leading Gaelic chiefs fled into exile in Europe, with the colonisation of forfeited lands in several counties by Scots and English settlers.



1642

The first Presbytery is established at Carrickfergus in County Antrim by an invading Scots army led by Robert Munro. Presbyterianism soon becomes Ulster's largest denomination.

1801

In the aftermath of the failed 1798 United Irishmen rebellion *(pictured)*, the Acts of Union take effect from 1 January, binding Ireland to Great Britain in a new 'United Kingdom'.

1888

Queen Victoria grants Belfast the status of a city. The Latin motto on its new coat of arms means, "What shall we give back in return for so much?"

1888

In Belfast Scottish inventor and veterinary surgeon John Boyd Dunlop develops the first practical pneumatic tyre for his son's tricycle.

GETTY IMAGES

most popular records for family history are church records, in particular the births, marriages and deaths within the Church of Ireland and Presbyterian records, with the earliest baptism record dating back to Christ Church Cathedral, Lisburn, for 1637. These are also the best sources for surrogate census records."

Free Research Guides

Church records are one of the topics covered by PRONI's handy research guides, which can be downloaded from its website in PDF format for free via **nidirect.gov.uk/articles/guides-proni-records**, and additional church-based holdings in Belfast can be found at the Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland (**https://presbyterianhistoryireland.com**) and the Methodist Historical Society of Ireland (**https://methodisthistoryireland.org**). Other material at PRONI of immense value to family historians includes school registers, estate papers, wills and testaments, as well as business records, particularly for shipbuilding and the linen industry. The detailed descriptions in the online catalogue at **nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/search-archives-online/ecatalogue** will help you identify holdings.

Does Stephen have a favourite record? "I have special affection for an account of witchcraft ▶

Free Online Records

This month's selection includes burial records from Belfast and the City of Derry, emigration records and passenger lists, and 19th-century street directories

Derry City Burials

w **tinyurl.com/derry-strabane-burials**

Search more than 45,000 transcribed entries from the Derry City Cemetery burial registers (1853–1961), listing both Protestants and Catholics.

Belfast Burial Records

w **tinyurl.com/belfast-city-cem**

Here you'll find details of burials at Belfast City Cemetery, Dundonald Cemetery and Roselawn Cemetery, including name, date and place of death, and lair. You can also buy images of some burial records for £1.50.

Passenger Lists

w **ulsterancestry.com**

This website's free resources include passenger lists for ships going to North America and records for each Ulster county in Northern Ireland, plus Cavan, Donegal and Monaghan in the Republic.

Street Directories

w **tinyurl.com/nidirect-databases**

PRONI's free databases include street directories (1819–1900), post-1858 wills and calendar entries, the 1912 Ulster Covenant, Valuation Revision Books, freeholders' records and Londonderry Corporation records.

Emigration Records

w **www.dippam.ac.uk**

This Queen's University Belfast's site offers access to the Irish Emigration Database and the Voices of Migration and Return oral history project.

GETTY IMAGES

1912
Almost half a million Protestants from Ulster sign the Ulster Covenant and Declaration of Loyalty petitions against Irish Home Rule on 28 September, commemorated as 'Ulster Day'.

1921
Northern Ireland is created as a result of the Partition of Ireland on 3 May, according to the terms of the 1920 Government of Ireland Act. Although meant as a temporary measure, the island remains partitioned to this day.

1923
The Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) is formed to replace the destroyed Public Record Office in Dublin as an archive for the north.

1946
Footballer George Best is born in Belfast on 22 May. He finds fame playing for Manchester United and Northern Ireland.

1998
After decades of strife in Northern Ireland, the beginning of the end for the Troubles is cemented by the Good Friday Agreement signed on 10 April.

Labourers load flax onto a tractor at Killinchy, County Down, 3 July 1948

in Carnmoney, dated 1807. A farmer employed a sorceress, Mary Butler or Butters, to make his cows produce milk. She blocked up the windows and doors in the cow shed and brewed a concoction of needles, large pins, nails, milk and sulphur, which made four members of his family faint. Three of them died and Mary was tried for murder, but acquitted."

Northern Ireland does not have the same set-up of county archives as exists in Britain, but there are many archives and libraries across the country that can help with your research, such as Derry Central Library's Local Studies section (see the helpful guide at **www.librariesni.org.uk/media/qcqjgvsd/derry-heritage-leaflet.pdf**) and the Mellon Centre for Migration Studies in Omagh (**mellonmigrationcentre.com**). Since it was previously part of Ireland, many historic records for Northern Ireland can also be found in the National Archives of Ireland in Dublin (**nationalarchives.ie**), such as the 1901 and 1911 censuses, which are available at the National Archives Genealogy website (**genealogy.nationalarchives.ie**). The British Newspaper Archive (**britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk**) also hosts many Northern Irish titles, while the Newspaper Library in Belfast Central Library can also help (**https://www.librariesni.org.uk/resources/cultural-heritage/newspaper-library/**).

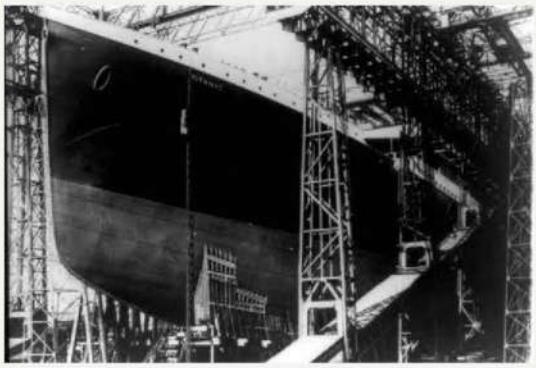
What's next for Northern Ireland's national archive? "One of the lessons we've learnt from 'PRONI 100' is that a single one-year campaign makes much more impact than many smaller campaigns," Stephen explains. "So we plan on repeating the single-campaign format for 2024/2025 with the theme 'Celebrating diversity and inclusivity in the archives'."

TOP TIP!

The National Archives at Kew (**nationalarchives.gov.uk**) and the National Archives of Ireland (**nationalarchives.ie**) also hold material for areas now in Northern Ireland.

LOCAL INDUSTRY

Shipbuilding Could your relation have helped to build the *Titanic* in Belfast?



The liner RMS *Titanic* in Harland and Wolff's shipyard, Belfast

Shipbuilding is one of Northern Ireland's main historic industries. Harland and Wolff, the largest yard, was founded in Belfast in 1861 by Edward James Harland and Gustav Wilhelm Wolff; its most famous vessel is the White Star Line's doomed RMS *Titanic*, launched in 1911. The yard's twin gantry cranes, Samson and Goliath, dominate the city's skyline to this day. Other local yards included MacIlwaine and Lewis (1868), and Workman, Clark and Company (c1880). The collection 'Britain, Trade Union Membership Registers' on Findmypast includes material from the United Society of Boilermakers and Iron Shipbuilders, many of whom worked in Northern Irish shipyards (**bit.ly/fmp-trad**).

Northern Irish Surnames

Are any of these in your family tree?

DOHERTY

This name originated in County Donegal with the Ó Dochartaigh or Dochartach (meaning 'hurtful'), clan, who according to legend descended from the semi-historical king Niall of the Nine Hostages.

GRAHAM

Taken from the Norman 'de Graham', this name was brought over from Scotland, the family being a principal riding clan of the Borders.

HEAN(E)Y

Heany comes from the Gaelic name Ó hÉighnigh, from the ancient kings of Fermanagh and Oriel, and is particularly common in Armagh.

KELLY

Originally Ó Ceallaigh (meaning 'descendant of Ceallach'), many Kellys in Northern Ireland descend from the family in Derry and Tyrone.

LYNCH

This name derives from the Ulster Gaelic sept (clan) Ó Loingsigh (*loingseach* means 'mariner'), and is common in Londonderry and Antrim.

McLAUGHLIN

McLaughlin has Norse, Gaelic and Scottish origins. The family was an important Donegal-based sept.

SMITH/SMYTH

This is the most common Northern Irish surname.

WILSON

Four fifths of Northern Ireland's Wilsons come from Scottish lines, the rest from English ones.

GETTY IMAGES

DIRECTORY

ARCHIVES AND LIBRARIES

Public Record Office Of Northern Ireland (PRONI)

a **2 Titanic Boulevard, Belfast BT3 9HQ**
t 028 9053 4800
e *proni@communities-ni.gov.uk*
w **nidirect.gov.uk/proni**

PRONI is Northern Ireland's national archive, and is open Mondays to Fridays. You can find many detailed research guides on its website, as well as free records databases including post-1858 probate material, the Ulster Covenant and directories from the 19th century.

Linen Hall Library

a **17 Donegall Square North, Belfast BT1 5GB**
t 028 9032 1707
e *info@linenhall.com*
w **linenhall.com**

Ireland's oldest surviving subscription library was founded in 1788. Visit for an impressive Irish and Local Studies collection, material delving into the Troubles, published family histories, and gravestone-inscription books.

Mellon Centre For Migration Studies

a **2 Mellon Road, Omagh BT78 5QU**
t 028 8225 6315
e *mcms@librariesni.org.uk*
w **mellonmigrationcentre.com**

The centre has an extensive library, and maintains the Irish Emigration Database which covers 1700–1950.

Newspaper Library

a **Belfast Central Library, Royal Avenue, Belfast BT1 1EA**
t 028 9050 9156
e *belfast.heritage@librariesni.org.uk*
w **https://www.librariesni.org.uk/resources/cultural-heritage/newspaper-library/**

This holds the largest collection of newspapers in Northern Ireland, in print and on microfilm.

GROUPS AND SOCIETIES

North Of Ireland Family History Society

a **Unit C4, Valley Business Centre, 67 Church Road, Newtownabbey BT36 7LS**
e *secretary@nifhs.org*
w **nifhs.org**

The society has branches in Ballymena, Belfast, Causeway Coast and Glens, Foyle, Killyleagh, Larne, Lisburn, Newtownabbey, South Tyrone and Tyrone, in addition to a dedicated research centre located in Newtownabbey.

Presbyterian Historical Society Of Ireland

a **Assembly Buildings, Fisherwick Place, Belfast BT1 6DW**
t 028 9041 7299
e *phsilibrarian@pcinet.org*
w **presbyterianhistoryireland.com**

Established in 1907, the society's mission is to "explore and promote an understanding of the history of Presbyterianism in Ireland". Its research centre includes many original church registers and records created by different denominations.

Ulster Historical Foundation

a **Bradley Thallon House, Unit 44D, Kiltonga Estate, Belfast Road, Newtownards BT23 4TJ**
t 028 9181 2073
e *enquiry@uhf.org.uk*
w **ancestryireland.com**

This family research organisation and book publisher is an educational charity that produces the annual journal *Familia*.

MUSEUMS

The Inniskillings Museum

a **The Castle, Enniskillen BT74 7HL**
t 028 6632 3142
e *info@inniskillingsmuseum*
w **inniskillingsmuseum.com**

This museum researches members of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers prior to 1922.

The Siege Museum

a **13 Society Street, Londonderry BT48 6PJ**
t 028 7126 1219
e *info@thesiegemuseum.org*
w **thesiegemuseum.org**

The museum tells the story of the Siege of Londonderry in 1689, in which up to 30,000 Protestants held the walled city against the Catholic James II for 105 days.

Titanic Museum/SS Nomadic

a **1 Olympic Way, Queen's Road, Titanic Quarter, Belfast BT3 9EP**
t 028 9076 6386
w **titanicbelfast.com**

The museum commemorates Northern Ireland's most famous ship, and the *Nomadic* is one of the tenders that carried passengers to her.

Ulster Folk Museum

a **153 Bangor Road, Cultra, Holywood BT18 0EU**
t 028 9042 8428
e *info@nationalmuseumsni.org*
w **ulsterfolkmuseum.org**

Find out about Ulster's historical traditions, skills and customs.

WEBSITES

Catholic Parish Registers At The NLI

w **registers.nli.ie**

You can search pre-1881 Catholic parish registers here for free.

Findmypast

w **search.findmypast.co.uk/search-world-records/ireland-belfast-and-ulster-directories**

The site's material for the region includes the database 'Ireland, Belfast & Ulster Directories'.

General Register Office For Northern Ireland

w **https://geni.nidirect.gov.uk**

Here you can search Northern Ireland birth and death records from 1864, and non-Catholic marriages back to 1845.

National Archives Genealogy

w **genealogy.nationalarchives.ie**

The free-to-access collections here include censuses, soldiers' wills and other probate material, and valuation records.

A Polish Jew's diary, 1943

Dr Karen Porter of the National Holocaust Centre and Museum shares a diary from the Kraków Ghetto Interview By Rosemary Collins

On Holocaust Memorial Day on 27 January, we remember the attempt by the Nazi regime and its collaborators to murder all of European Jewry during the Second World War. Many of us have relations who were killed, or came to Britain as refugees. The scale of the tragedy is hard to fathom, but the voices of the victims can help us to gain some understanding of the true dimension of the crime.

The National Holocaust Centre and Museum (NHCM) is located in Laxton, Nottinghamshire, and makes the memory of the Holocaust relevant for today through exhibitions and educational programmes. Its holdings include the diary of Julius Feldman which sheds light on life in the Kraków Ghetto, as NHCM researcher Dr Karen Porter explains.

Who Was Julius Feldman?

Julius Feldman, affectionately called Julek, was born on 24 December 1923, and grew up in Kraków. In September 1939, the German Army invaded Poland. Julius considered himself a proud Polish patriot, writing, "In those days, there were no Poles, Jews, Ukrainians… Poland was everyone's fatherland." But the Nazis did not agree: they classified Julius and millions of others as Jews. Within weeks, Julius' father lost his shop, the family home was confiscated, and Julius was thrown out of high school.

Can You Tell Me More About His Diary?

Written over a period of just two months in spring 1943, Julius' diary vividly captures fears and hopes, daily hardship and personal tragedies in ways that only an eyewitness living through these events possibly could. Julius chronicles how the Jews of Kraków were forced into the ghetto. He records the last chaotic weeks of the ghetto, his gruelling work as a slave labourer in the concentration camp in Płaszów, and the daily deportations to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Heartbreakingly, he describes his last moments with his family: "My poor Father… held his hands out helplessly to show he was going into the unknown… Dear Janek [Julius' brother] wept terribly as he walked alone. Perhaps he met up with Mother somewhere because they were not far from each other."

Julius' diary ends abruptly, mid-sentence, on 11 April 1943. His exact fate is unknown. Decades after the war, construction workers discovered the diary hidden in a wall, where Julius must have left it.

The diary came to England with one of the few surviving family members. Eager to keep the memory of Julius alive, they turned to the NHCM to help with its publication. In 2002, the book was published, with a moving introduction by Stephen Smith.

Stephen and his family had created the NHCM in 1995 – the first memorial site for the victims of the Holocaust in Britain. To realise this vision, they gave up their own family home, and turned it into a space where survivors would share their testimony almost daily. In the heart of rural Nottinghamshire, the museum is surrounded by more than 1,000 white roses; each rose was planted by survivors, to commemorate a loved one who was murdered in the Holocaust.

Our exhibitions are based on the testimonies and artefacts of our survivors. It is a peaceful and friendly environment to contemplate difficult questions.

Why Did You Choose The Diary As Your Gem?

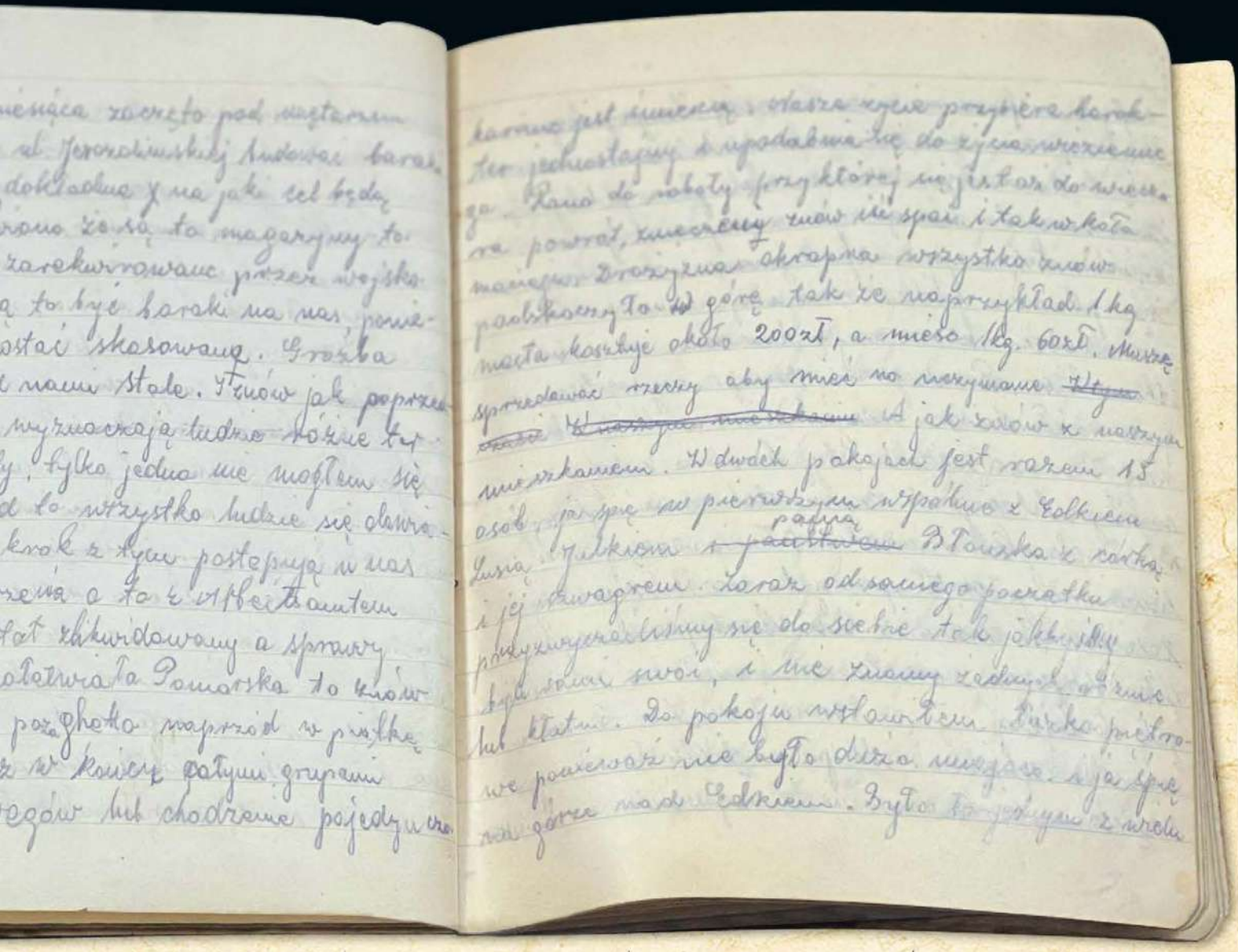
As a central piece of our Holocaust exhibition, the diary of Julius Feldman fascinates visitors because it captures an authentic voice from the past.

Through his diary, Julius speaks directly to us. He

Visit Us

National Holocaust Centre And Museum
a Acre Edge Road, Laxton, Newark NG22 0PA
t 01623 836627
e *office@holocaust.org.uk*
w **holocaust.org.uk**

The NHCM is open 10am–4.30pm daily except for Saturdays. The archive is accessible by appointment; to book, email *curatorial.enquiries@holocaust.org.uk*.



reminds us of the millions of innocent Jewish people who were murdered during the Holocaust whose voices are lost forever. He testifies to their resilience in their struggle for survival, and he adds important aspects to the picture.

The largest Jewish community in Europe lived in Poland; about half of the six million Jewish victims of the Holocaust were Polish. Poland was the heart of a vibrant and diverse Jewish community, with a wide spectrum of political and religious orientations, including the Jewish-socialist Bund movement, liberal to orthodox Judaism, and secular Zionism. Julius, whose father read the local Bundist newspaper, reflects on this diversity in his diary. Faith and the desire for justice remain strong reference points throughout. On the last page of his diary, Julius exclaims in anguish, "And where is the Lord God who watches all this and does not help us, who does not send any punishment for these criminals?"

In the diary, modern readers get to know one individual. This is vital. The number of six million can be too large to imagine. But listening to the voice of one person creates a personal connection to this history: we are drawn into the story, and we experience the world through Julius' eyes. This empathy can inspire us to ask questions about the underlying reasons for the Holocaust, and the 2,000-year history of Christian anti-Jewish racism that made it possible. In this, England had played an important role.

Today, antisemitism is rising once again. Learning about the Holocaust through the voice of one victim, Julius, can inspire us to challenge racist stereotypes, and to take a critical look at our own beliefs.

Faith and the desire for justice remain strong reference points throughout

What Other Documents Are In Your Collection?

Our collection consists of a carefully curated selection of unique documents, artefacts and personal photographs. Most were donated by Holocaust survivors. But we also have documents and artefacts donated by members of the armed forces who liberated the Nazi camps. We are also the guardians of a significant collection of survivor testimonies. Together, these allow us to reconstruct a 360-degree view of life before, during and after the Holocaust.

To make our collections accessible and engaging, we are constantly experimenting with new technologies. For example, the Forever Project preserves recorded testimony as an interactive experience, which allows visitors to ask their own questions. We teach the Holocaust with a contemporary purpose that is still very urgent today.

REVIEWS

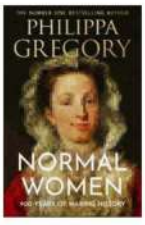
The latest books on history and genealogy, plus apps, podcasts and websites

The illustrations in the book include *(clockwise from above)* a victim of consumption, socialist Annie Besant (1847–1933) and a woman being paraded wearing a scold's bridle

Normal Women

900 Years Of Making History

Philippa Gregory
William Collins, 688 pages, £25



Written in the colourful and thought-provoking style of Philippa Gregory's historical fiction, this stupendous compendium of the past 900 years of women's history in England has much to offer the family historian. Injustice against women goes back at least as far as the Norman Conquest, purports Gregory, but for most family historians, it will be her discussion of women in the 19th and 20th centuries that informs and resonates.

Just about everything the ordinary women in your family experienced over the past few hundred years will be covered here. Work, slavery, marriage, childbirth, criminality, male violence and protest are all tackled through a wealth of entertaining examples supported by reference to changes in legislature. Gregory is particularly interested in "the huge spectrum of sexual identity that was [known in the past] but which we have tried to forget". She puts this down to the start of civil registration in 1837, which insisted on recording one of only two options for the sex of a child.

If you have a specific question about the women in your family, you are likely to find information here to help you. How unusual was it that my ancestor was pregnant at the altar? Some 20–40 per cent of brides "in English country parishes" were apparently in this condition in the period 1800–1848. How rare was it for a woman to remain single in the early 20th century? There were 1,158,000 single women recorded on the 1921 census. Gregory fleshes out such half-known statistics with hundreds of vibrant stories.

Ruth A Symes is a writer and historian. Find out more at searchmyancestry.blogspot.com

PUBLIC DOMAIN

DIGITAL PICKS

Rosemary Collins highlights three digital resources that caught our eye this month

WATCH

No Place Like Home

coramstory.org.uk/no-place-like-home-the-story-of-the-foundling-hospital/

Free

Made as part of the Coram charity's five-year Voices Through Time project, this 40-minute documentary traces the history of London's 18th-century Foundling Hospital and reveals the poignant stories of some of the children who lived there and their mothers, using Coram's own archives.

PODCAST

Ironclad Sisterhood

https://ironcladsisterhood.sag.org.au/podcast/

Free

This collaborative research project from the Society of Australian Genealogists reimagines the lives of convict women in New South Wales, using an index of records created by genealogist Jessie Hill in the 1970s. You can find out more about the stories the project's uncovered with this podcast.

WEBSITE

20 People Of The 20s

nationalarchives.gov.uk/20s-people/20-people-of-the-20s/

Free

This project by The National Archives at Kew to mark the release of the 1921 census is now complete. You can read biographies of 20 individuals found in the census with the themes "LGBTQ+ lives", "Female pioneers", "Personal tragedy", "Stars of the 20s", "National identity", "Everyday heroes" and "Lawmakers and lawbreakers".

DAVID WILSON

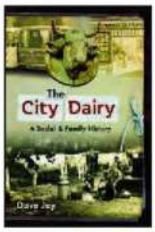
The City Dairy

A Social And Family History

SOCIAL HISTORY

Dave Joy

Pen & Sword, 192 pages, £16.99



Here Dave Joy, who sadly passed away at the end of October, paints a picture of an under-reported phenomenon that flourished from the early 19th to the mid-20th century. Britain's seismic shift from rural communities to densely populated cities hastened the rise of city cow-keepers, who lived cheek-by-udder with their cattle in suburban terraces, to sate a growing demand for fresh milk.

The City Dairy is divided into three parts: "The Life and Times of the City Dairyman" is followed by a research guide and case studies, helpfully steering readers in their own research. While packed with information, the book is easy to read, enhanced by enlightening illustrations, from vintage photographs and advertisements to ledgers.

The Harper family owned the Chestnut Grove Dairy in Wavertree, Liverpool

Leaning heavily on his family's own dairy in suburban Liverpool, Joy presents a fascinating social history, drawing on themes of mobility, domestic migration and the creep of modernity. Along the way, the reader is briefed on the various folk tales, paraphernalia and regalia associated with the trade, and treated to some wonderful vocabulary on the anatomy of a cowshed, from 'skelbus' to 'foddergang'.

Remnants of this lost trade can still be discovered around city suburbs today, and with a returning emphasis on food miles and the provenance of our produce, *The City Dairy* is a timely reminder that fresh is best.

Felix Rowe writes for history magazines and edited Tim Taylor's 2019 book *Time Team's Dig Village*

Reader Review YOUR CHANCE TO ASSESS THE LATEST BOOKS

Guy Gibson And His Dambuster Crew

WW2

Charles Foster

The History Press, 256 pages, £20

Guy Gibson and his Dambuster crew carried out the most famous bombing operation of the Second World War in May 1943. The aim was to destroy the three dams in the Ruhr valley, the industrial heart of Germany, and to cause massive disruption to the country's war production. This book tells the individual biographical stories of Guy Gibson and his crew for the very first time and is written by Charles Foster, nephew of Dambuster pilot David Maltby.

What a wonderful book – I loved it from the word go. This is so interesting, especially the biographies of the individual pilots and their back stories. You read about their previous training and missions, and how they all came together to become the Dambusters. All the men were awarded medals for their role in the mission. There are many photos from family archives included as well.

Anyone with an interest in this unique and very famous bombing raid will really enjoy this book. It is well written, and with the family connection is really an inside story. Highly recommended.

Rosemary Wilmot, Evesham

Rosemary has been researching her family tree for the past 44 years

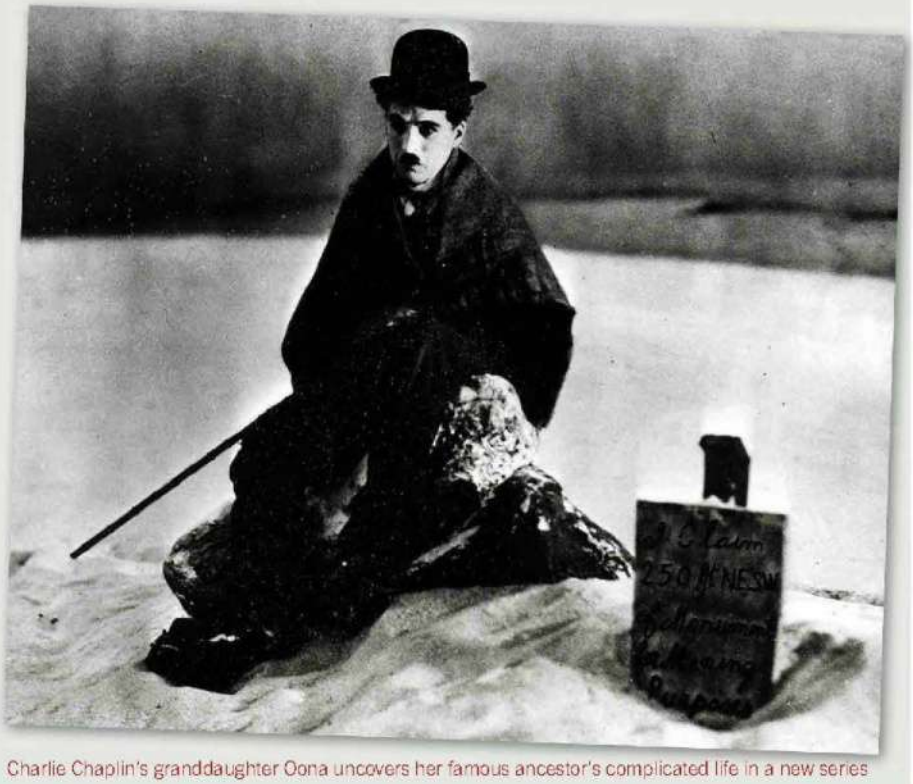
Join Us... Send us an email if you'd like to join our reviewing panel
e ***wdytyaeditorial@ourmedia.co.uk***

TV & RADIO

Jonathan Wright previews upcoming programmes on history and family history

Hollywood Exiles

BBC World Service and BBC Sounds
Monday 22 January



Charlie Chaplin's granddaughter Oona uncovers her famous ancestor's complicated life in a new series

In terms of having a noteworthy ancestor, few can be as famous as Oona Chaplin's grandfather Charlie (1899–1977). In the silent-film era, Charlie's Little Tramp character made his creator a global superstar. And yet despite this extraordinary success, he would ultimately be exiled from Hollywood and indeed from his adopted home, the USA. What happened?

The answer is central to this 10-part series presented by Oona, an actor herself who appeared in *Game of Thrones*. The programme uses her forebear's life as a key to unlock the story of how Hollywood arrived at the blacklist era. These were years in the middle of the 20th century when directors, actors and writers suspected of sympathising with left-wing causes – in particular, those who had been members of the Communist Party USA or who refused to cooperate with Congressional investigations into the party – were effectively barred from working in the film industry.

In many respects, Charlie Chaplin was an unlikely figure to be caught up in the witch hunts of the 1940s and 1950s. As well as an actor, he was a film producer, a studio owner and a businessman. He may have grown up in poverty in South London, but he truly lived the American Dream.

And yet, as Oona discovers, his identification with the underdog in such films as *The Immigrant* (1917), centred on a newcomer to the USA, attracted attention from the authorities early on. The roots of the blacklist, it turns out, date back at least as far as the Federal Bureau of Investigations' files from the 1920s.

As well as exploring the biography of a fascinating man – and a controversial figure in terms of, for example, his relationships with younger women and his fondness for material wealth – there's a sense in the series of Oona, who never met Charlie, teasing out family stories she's rarely if ever heard before. In the first episode, for example, she talks with her mother, the actor Geraldine Chaplin, about memories of being forced to move to Switzerland.

Poignantly, Oona also visits The Cinema Museum in Kennington, South London, housed in a building that was once part of the Lambeth Workhouse. The seven-year-old Charlie was sent to live at the institution because his mother Hannah (1865–1928), a music-hall performer with mental-health issues, could no longer look after him.

My Grandparents' War

Netflix
Now streaming

For Netflix subscribers, there's now a chance to catch up with Channel 4's well-received *My Grandparents' War* without the commercial breaks of Channel 4's streaming service. Each episode features a famous performer investigating the experiences of relations during times of conflict, most usually the Second World War. Across the programme's two series, which aired in 2019 and 2022, the cast list is as starry as anyone could wish for, with episodes featuring, among others, Helena Bonham Carter, Mark Rylance, Carey Mulligan, Toby Jones and Keira Knightley.

The 1970s Dinner Party

Channel 5 and My5
Late December

Were all 1970s dinner parties like *Abigail's Party*, writer–director Mike Leigh's excruciating 1977 study of Britain's suburban middle classes and their aspirations? Probably not, but many of the social mores from the decade now seem strange and alien, even to those of us who were around at the time.

Accordingly, there should be plenty of fun to be had from this one-off special from the team behind August's three-part series *The 70s Supermarket*. Debbie McGee will be hosting TV presenter Johnny Ball, singer Cheryl Baker, actor Vicki Michelle from *'Allo 'Allo* and musician Leee John, while TV chef Rustie Lee is in charge of the cooking. Expect, among other retro delights, "a crazy take on fondue".

Digging For Britain

BBC Two
January

It's that time of year again, when Prof. Alice Roberts presents a wide-ranging round-up of the latest archaeological work being conducted across the country. The new series will feature six episodes, and highlights will include the excavation of a Roman-era bathhouse in Carlisle and a remarkable discovery that suggests Roman villas were still being used in the Dark Ages.

Lady Killers With Lucy Worsley

BBC Radio 4 and BBC Sounds
January

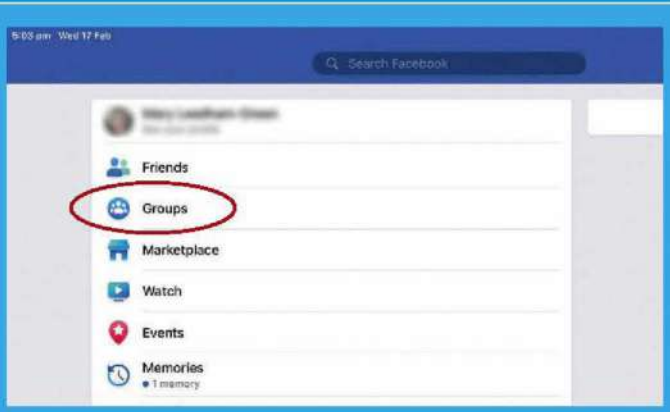
Details were sketchy as *Who Do You Think You Are? Magazine* went to press, but listen out in January for a third series of *Lady Killers*. In each episode historian Lucy Worsley and expert guests, tackling the subject from "a contemporary, feminist perspective", tease out the stories of why different women committed crimes in the 19th and 20th centuries. Their approach reveals much about the harsh societies in which these women lived, and often manages to humanise figures who have long been painted as monsters.

GETTY IMAGES

WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?

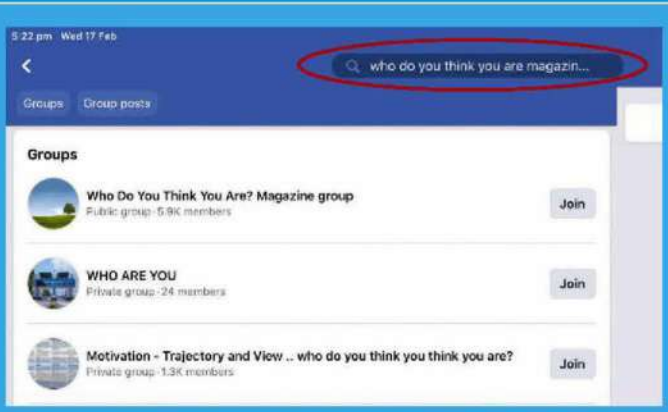
Join Our FACEBOOK GROUP

Did you know that we have a friendly Facebook Group where family historians can share new discoveries, ask for help or just chat about genealogy? If you haven't joined a Facebook Group before, don't worry, it's very simple!



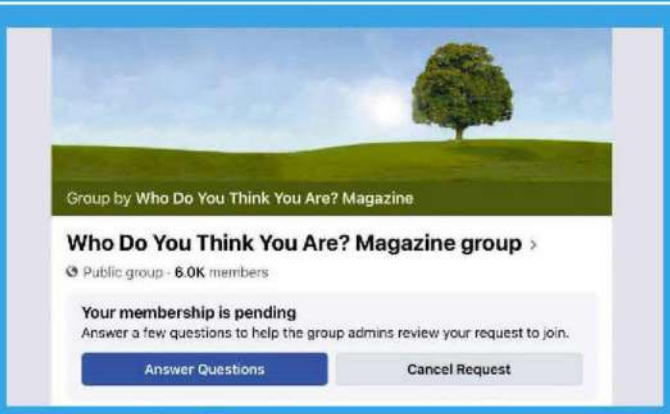
1 Click On The 'Groups' Icon

From the Facebook homepage, click on the 'Groups' icon (this may be at the bottom of the screen on the mobile app or from the menu, or above your News Feed).



2 Search For Our Group

Search for the *Who Do You Think You Are? Magazine* Group, then click 'Join' next to the name. You will need to answer two questions and read and agree to our rules.



3 Wait To Be Added

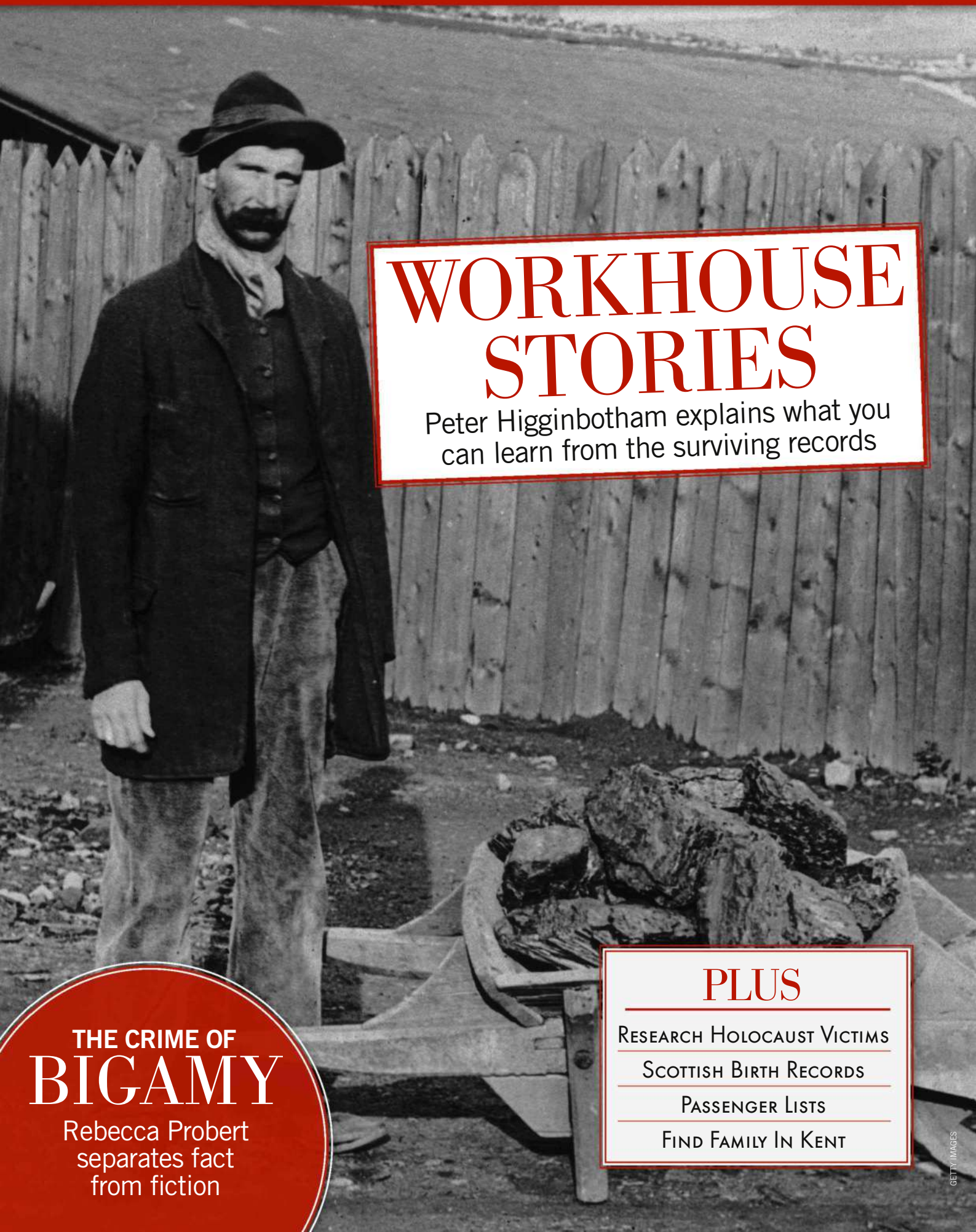
We are then notified, and will add you as a member as soon as possible. The group is growing rapidly, but you shouldn't have to wait too long before you're approved.

4 Start Posting!

You can either upload your own query or respond to other people's posts. It's a great way to share your love of family history and get help with your brick walls.

NEXT MONTH

Our February issue goes on sale on **30 January**



WORKHOUSE STORIES

Peter Higginbotham explains what you can learn from the surviving records

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- Research Holocaust Victims
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Rebecca Probert separates fact from fiction

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'Felix Was A Leading Light In Bowling'

Tony's great grand uncle Felix Hotchkiss was an influential bowler

Tony Hotchkiss was thrilled to discover that one of his relations became a headteacher, an author and a legend in a sport he loved. By **Gail Dixon**

Mine is a family of weavers and spinners on my maternal side, and miners on my paternal side," says Tony Hotchkiss. "However, my great grand uncle Felix Hotchkiss broke the mould."

Felix was born in 1870 in Netherton, which is near Dudley in Worcestershire. His parents were James Hotchkiss, a miner, and his wife Elizabeth Shaw.

Felix was clearly a bright young man, for in the 1891 census he was listed as a "school teacher" boarding in Islington, London.

Archive (**britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk**), an ever-growing site that already has more than 72 million historic newspaper pages.

"He played the violin and was a very good baritone, performing in many concerts in London. I've found advertisements for the events in local newspapers."

Cricket was another of Felix's passions, and he played for the prestigious North London Cricket Club, which he captained for 21 years. An article in *The Islington and Holloway Press* explained that "in his prime, fast bowler Felix Hotchkiss was a match winner". The journalist also described him as "a fearless and free-scoring batsman".

"I was on eBay (**ebay.co.uk**) one day, and searched for my surname. A reference to Felix appeared, and I discovered that he had written two books about bowls: *The Art of Bowls*, from 1932, and *The Game of Bowls*, published in 1937. I bought both titles, and read them."

These two guides explain the rules of the game and how to play. *The Art of Bowls* was, to quote Felix's own words, "written in the hope that it may be of service to all bowlers and particularly to young bowlers".

Felix became a leading light in the sport. He played at county level for the North London Bowling Club, and was secretary of key organisations including the national governing body the English Bowling Association (EBA). He was an ambassador for the sport, and helped to organise the National Championships between the home nations.

He was also the editor of the *English Bowling Association Year Book*, which was published in April 1939. "I found a copy of the yearbook on eBay as well and, to my amazement, it contained a picture of Felix. The caption explained that he was 'Secretary, EBA'."

Like so many others, Felix and Fanny's lives were changed forever by the First World War. Their eldest son Felix junior joined the Middlesex Regiment, 10th Battalion, and became a lieutenant. He served on the Western Front and fell during the Battle of Arras in May 1917, when he was only 21 years old.

The family remained in North London and Felix retired in September 1931, after 41 years in education. He passed away of carcinoma of the prostate gland in June 1939 at Middlesex Hospital, Marylebone. The flag of the EBA was flown at half-mast in commemoration.

Newspaper obituaries published in Cambridgeshire, London and Warwickshire sang Felix's praises. They highlighted his "charming personality", long career as a headteacher and selfless dedication to the advancement of sport. "I'm proud to be related to such a distinguished gentleman as Felix," Tony says.

I'm proud to be related to such a distinguished gentleman as Felix

TONY HOTCHKISS lives in West Yorkshire and is a retired payroll manager. He started researching his tree in 2005

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